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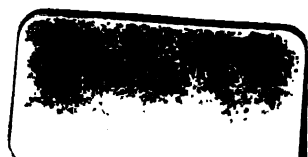
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THE HOMILIST.

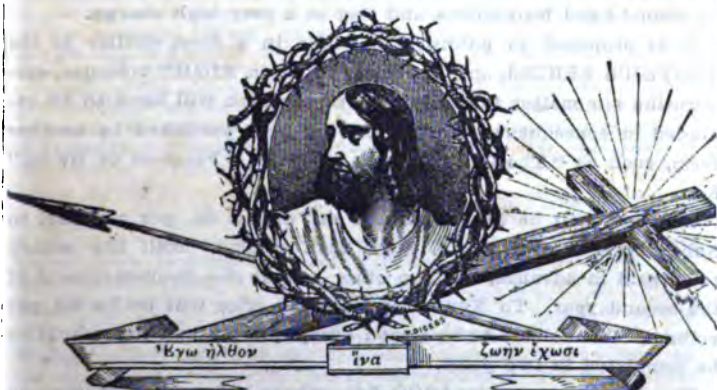
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A HOMILY
ON
Fearless Fronting of the Future.
A NEW YEAR'S DISCOURSE.

"God is our refuge and strength," etc.—PSALM xli. 1-11.

ANOTHER year has just departed, and a new one has broken upon us. The last billow of the old has receded from the shore, and gone back into the awful abysses of the past, and the waves of the new one are just flowing in upon us. Amidst the mingling echoes of both we are touched with a mysterious sadness. How much the ebbing tide has borne away from our world! How many human institutions, plans, and projects! How many myriads of the race! Among them not a few of the greatest men of any time or land; and some most dear to these hearts of ours. They are gone—gone for ever! How much has it shortened the brief space of our mortal life, and pressed us nearer to that eternity in which all that is human will soon be lost! How much has it added to our already heavy load of responsibility! May we hope that it has added to our spiritual intelligence, our love of the

Great One, our sympathy with the true, and our moral might! What shall the new year bring us? With what will its successive billows be laden? Each one as it breaks on the shore will bring something. Who shall tell what shall be on the morrow?

No class of thought, no passage of Holy Writ, is more suited to enable us to front the mysterious future with fearlessness than this grand Psalm.

It suggests two thoughts.

I. There MAY BE GREAT TEMPESTS in our future.

"Though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." As the Psalm in all probability owes its origin to the miraculous destruction of the Assyrian host in the reign of Hezekiah,* these imaginary and supposed terrible convulsions of nature may represent the raging of the Assyrian hosts as they encamped in battle array round Jerusalem. Then indeed "the heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved." † Tem-

* 2 Kings xix. 35. Isaiah xxxvii.

† Regarding this Psalm, as composed when Sennacherib invaded Judea and besieged Jerusalem, taunting Hezekiah with his trust in God, the meaning of the various sections may be described as follows:—

The first three verses describe the danger of the besieged and the defence they had made, and express their confidence in their position. They had made God their refuge and strength. The figure of the sea, and its waves roaring around the base of the mountainous cliffs, is taken by the poets to express the hosts of the Assyrians encamped around Jerusalem in battle array. The gathering together of multitudes is repeatedly alluded to under this illustration, and the well-known inroads of the raging sea, occasioning the fall of vast masses of cliffs, well express the imminence of the danger. The destruction of the city seems certain. No other city remained. Jerusalem will be overthrown by the force of the Assyrians. Not so. The letter of defiance has been taken up into the house of the Lord, and spread before Jehovah. The word of promise is sent at once through the Prophet Isaiah. And the men lift up their voices,—“The Lord of hosts,” etc.

pests, here represented by awful convulsions of nature, have often occurred in human history. The annals of the past are filled with records of social earthquakes and raging tempests. "The mountains," the largest things in human life, thrones, governments, fortunes, have been carried into the midst of revolutionary seas, which have roared and heaved, and with their dashing floods made things stable as the "mountains shake." What has been may come again. God has said, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more until He come whose right it is, and I will give it to Him." Error and wrong are here, and the God of truth and justice will not allow them to rest. So long as they are

The form of the fourth verse may be thus explained. Hezekiah's name is distinctly associated with some great work of bringing water into Jerusalem. This he had cut off from the environs. He had stopped the waters of the fountains that were without the city; saying, "For why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water?" (2 Chron. xxxii. 3, 4). The city has what the enemy has not. The people of God have peace, and are made glad, from a sense of their security. There is no peace to the wicked,—they can never be safe.

The fifth verse, and first part of the sixth, describe the condition of those without the city while the salvation tarries. The enemy are in constant motion. The city looks to God, and expects His immediate help. "God will help her," and that when the morning breaks.

The latter part of the sixth verse, in all its majestic brevity and quiet swiftmess, completely describes the sudden and complete destruction of the host.

The seventh verse is the burst of praise uttered at the dawn, when the hundred fourscore and five thousand of the Assyrians were all dead corpses. It is the Lord of hosts. Greater has He been than those who were against them. It is the God of Jacob, the God who had helped their ancestor and given them their name—the same God—the mighty God of Israel.

In the eighth and ninth verses we may see the Israelites, some from the city walls, and others in the stricken camp, completing their deliverance.

In the tenth verse, the voice of Jehovah is heard, "Be still," etc. Again the chorus breaks forth, "The Lord of hosts," etc.

here there must be perpetual social fermentation, ay, and revolution after revolution. The great sea of the world's mind is destined, from time to time, to be so agitated by love for the right that it shall shake all the "mountains" of political, ecclesiastical, and social wrong with the "swelling thereof." Indeed, the agitation, if not so violent and visible in this age as in some past times, is deeper, wider, stronger. Into whatever domain we step there is commotion: in the realms of *politics* party is contending with party and kingdom with kingdom; in the realms of *commerce* what fierce competitions, —every little spirit is striving for the mastery; in the realms of *literature* opinions battle with opinions and systems with systems; in the realms of *religion*, in the very heart of the holy city, "the waters roar with the swelling" of acrimonious controversies and sectarian feuds. Now, whether any very terrible revolutions shall occur in our brief future on this earth we know not. But we know right well that changes deeply affecting us are not far on. Of all revolutions, none is greater to the individual man than *death*, involving the utter disorganizing of the body, the disruption of all material ties, and the launching of the soul into the awful mysteries of retribution. And then, in the future not only of ourselves but of all departed and coming men, there are revolutions more terrible than any that has yet happened. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Here is a conflagration. Fire now, in its most terrible forms, is reined in. Whether you see it belching its floods from the volcano, flashing in the lightning, or enfolding cities in its sheets of flame, you feel that it is under a restraining force. It is circumscribed. But now it is to be let

loose. The lion of all material forces has left his den, and speeds ravenously through the world. The earth—its rivers and oceans, its fields and its forests, and all the works “that are therein,” all that human genius has created, that human industry and skill through all ages have produced, all the works of God and man on this earth will be burned up.

“The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temple, the great globe itself,
And all which it inherit, shall dissolve;
And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a wreck behind.”

Oh, what a future awaits us! How shall we face it? Is there any way by which we can look at it without the most terrible alarm? Can we front it with unruffled calmness, with magnanimous fearlessness? Important question this! And our answer is—

II. There NEED BE NO DREAD FOR our future. But how can terror be avoided? We have the answer in this sublime poem: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

What can so invigorate and ennoble the soul as to enable it to meet the most tumultuous future with a fearless heart? *Confidence in God*. Elohim, not invincible armies or triumphant navies, “is our refuge and strength.” There are several things expressed in this poem which encourage this confidence. First: His *protective sufficiency*. “God is our refuge.” A refuge infinite in its amplitude, impregnable in its resistance, interminable in its duration. “And strength”—our safe retreat; “a very present help in trouble;” never distant, always within easy reach; He is “in the midst;” those that trust in Him, “shall not be moved. God shall help them, and that right early.” We can be involved in no difficulty from which He cannot extricate, exposed to no danger

from which He cannot shelter, assailed by no enemies from which He cannot deliver. Another thing expressed in this poem, which encourages confidence in God, is, Secondly: His *perennial grace*. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High." What is the true "city of God?" Not architecture, not an assemblage of buildings, not a place of habitation; but the *community of godly spirits*. This is the city of Elohim. A city pure, harmonious, ever-growing. As the stream that issued from Eden to water the whole garden, so the gracious influences of Heaven, like a river, roll through all the parts of this blessed community. So long as a besieged city is supplied with a sufficiency of water, it can hold out against the enemy. This river of grace has never failed, and never will, hence let us trust in Him. There is yet another thing expressed in this poem which encourages confidence in God. Thirdly: His *providential interposition*. "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered His voice, and the earth trembled;" "Come, behold the works of the Lord, the desolations He hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth, He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder, He burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our Refuge." There is undoubtedly an allusion here to the invasion of Sennacherib, one of the most magnificent of the Assyrian kings, a man whose invincible armies and long succession of triumphs struck terror amongst all the kingdoms of the ancient East. At night, his triumphant legions encamped about the walls of Jerusalem. The waters of anxiety, terror, and dismay must have roared in thunder through the "Holy City" that night.

Who shall defend the city? Who shall drive back the invaders? All the men of Jerusalem were powerless for the work. Elohim mercifully interposed. As "the heathen raged, and the kingdoms were moved, He uttered His voice, and the earth trembled." In the morning, either by pestilence or some supernatural messenger, the 185,000 soldiers lay dead outside the city walls. "He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder, and burneth the chariot in fire." He shattered their implements of destruction. "Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made on the earth." See the teeming thousands of dead soldiers, clutching in their stiffened hands the weapons with which they sought to take the city. Byron, in one of his loftiest inspirations, has given a poetic sketch of the scene.

"The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of his spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
The host with their banners at sunset were seen;
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the angel of death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still.

And there lay the steed, with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider, distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone:
The lances unlifted, the trumpets unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord."

"What desolations He hath made on the earth." Mark them well. Not the desolation of virtue, order, or peace, or aught that ennobles or beatifies human nature. But desolations amongst the desolators of human rights, of human happiness and progress. Destructions amongst the destroyers, of the enemies of virtue, of souls, and God. He destroys the works of the devil. "He maketh wars to cease." This is His work, to break the "bow," cut the "spear," burn the "chariot," shiver the cannons and the bayonets, and all the fiendish implements of war. With confidence in such a God as this, we need not fear. Nay, we will "be still." Leave off all anxious thoughts and efforts, and know that He is God. More, we will sing, "The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our Refuge." Portray our future in the most terrific aspects, let it be mantled with clouds and roar with earthquakes, let it peal with thunders and blaze with lightnings, "therefore will not we fear," "the Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." "Come, Philip," said Luther to Melancthon, "let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm." And sing it they did, in Luther's own version.

"A sure stronghold, our God is He,
A timely shield and weapon;
Our help He'll be, and set us free
From every ill can happen."

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Psalms.

Our Purpose.—Many learned and devout men have gone *philologically* through this *TANACH*, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal *hermeneutics* of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough *homiletic* treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

Our Method.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1.) The *HISTORY* of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2.) *ANNOTATIONS* of the passage. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase, or allusion that may occur.—(3.) The *ANALYSIS* of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is amongst the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4.) The *HOMILETICS* of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavour so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately educed, as to suggest such thoughts, and indicate such sermonising methods, as may promote the proficiency of modern pulpit ministrations.

Subject: The Religious Aspects of a Soul in Earnest.

"As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks," etc.—PSALM xlii. 1-5.

HISTORY.—"To the chief Musician, Maschil for the sons of Korah."

This psalm commences the second of the five parts into which the whole book has been divided, and it extends to the close of the seventy-second. The sons of Korah were a Levitical family of singers (1 Chron. vi. 32). And they continued as singers from the time of David until the reign of Jehoshaphat. It is called a *Maschil*, which means a didactic composition, and seems to have been composed in order to give instruction. It clearly contains the experience of David, and most probably refers to his exclusion from the Temple in consequence of Absalom's rebellion. It is characterized by David's style of utterance, his elevated genius and depth of emotion. Its atmosphere bears the aroma of his distinguished spirit.

ANNOTATIONS: VER. 1.—"*As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.*" The "hart," or hind, heated and hunted to exhaustion, pants for the refreshing stream, even so does David burn with thirst for God. "I have seen," says Thomson, "large flocks of these panting harts gathering round the water of the brooks in the desert of Sahara, so subdued by thirst that you could approach quite near them before they fled." The language expresses an intense desire for God.

Ver. 2.—“*My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?*” “Thirsted has my soul for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?” “The past tense of the first verb shows that he is not expressing a desire just conceived for the first time, but one with which he is already familiar. Of the two divine names here used, one (Elohim) describes God as an object of religious worship, the other (El) as a Being of infinite power.” —Alexander. “*The living God*,” as distinguished from lifeless idols, philosophic abstraction, and theistic theories. “*When shall I come and appear before God?*” I am away from His temple, I burn to return to His sanctuary.

Ver. 3.—“*My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?*” “My tears have been my food by day and by night. While they say continually unto me, Where is thy God?” —Delitzsch. Where is thy God? By this they insinuated that Jehovah had forsaken him.

Ver. 4.—“*When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me.*” “These things?” what does he mean? His former advantages and enjoyments, or his present privations and sufferings? We think the former, hence the next clause: “I will remember,” that is, I will think thereon, pouring out my soul within me. “*For I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.*” A good translation is the following: “Now, when I think thereupon, I pour out my heart within me, how I went with the multitude, and brought them forth to the house of God with the voice of praise and thanksgiving with such as keep holy day.” In deep sorrow, one’s tendency is to call up the remembrance of better times gone, and thus increase one’s pain by brooding over the contrast.

Ver. 5.—“*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance.*” “Why art thou so heavy, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me? Oh, put thy trust in God, for I will yet give Him thanks which is the help of my countenance and my God.” The word “for” is not in the original. He exhorts his soul to hope in Elohim as the help of his countenance and his God.

ARGUMENT.—The Psalmist, torn from his native land, amid the taunts of his captors, craves for fellowship with the living God, and dwells lovingly on those festivals of the Temple which he once enjoyed.

HOMILETICS.—These verses present to us the religious aspects of a soul in earnest. We see it—

I. INTENSELY THIRSTING AFTER GOD. “As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.

My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." History, observation, consciousness, show that amongst the deepest and most ineradicable instincts of the soul is the craving for a "living God." The god of science, which is inexorable law or force, will not satisfy it; nor will the God of pantheism, which is a vague, inappreciable impersonality, do for it; it wants a living God, a Personality, free, intelligent, loving, recognizing and reciprocating all human love. It craves for Him rather than His. His riches, His universe, will not satisfy it; the soul wants *Him* as its portion.

First: This craving for "the living God" *renders all logical arguments for a Supreme Being unnecessary.* As the organization of my eye implies light, my ear sound, my lungs air, this instinctive desire which I have within me for a God, implies a God. The men who say that this instinct has come down to us, either by generation or tradition, from the superstitious men of distant times, are outside the pale of rational debate. What is universal, is constitutional; and what is constitutional, is Divine; and what is Divine, is true.

Secondly: This craving for "the living God" *indicates the only method for elevating the race.* You may raise man intellectually by appealing to his intellect, æsthetically by appealing to his imagination, but you can only raise the *man* by appealing to his religious instincts, which are the underlying springs of all his activities.* We see here the soul—

II. GREATLY DISTRESSED ON ACCOUNT OF THE WICKED. "My tears have been my meat day and night." The wicked distressed him in two ways.

First: By *taunting him on account* of his religion. "They continually say unto me, Where is thy God?" As if they had said, Thou hast long been boasting of thy God, declaring His interest in thee, His goodness towards thee, His promises towards thee; but where is now thy God when thou art in distress? The good in all ages have been tormented thus by the wicked around them.

* See further remarks on this verse, *Homilist*, Editor's Series, vol. vii. p. 67.

Secondly: By *depriving him of the public privileges* of his religion. Their conduct had sent him far away from Jerusalem, the holy city, and the Temple, whither he was wont to go to worship. He tells us here that he went to "the house of God; and more, that he went with the multitude to the house of God. Though a king, he was not too proud to join the throng in such a walk. He went with joy and praise to the house of God. It was not a mere task to him. He went to keep holy day." The memory of those lost privileges saddened him greatly. "When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude: I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy day." Much of the soul's sorrow grows out of the memory of joys and privileges for ever gone. The echo of temple music sounded through his memory, and the festive scene of public worship flitted before his imagination, and all deepened his sadness. We see it—

III. ANXIOUSLY EXPOSTULATING WITH SELF ON ACCOUNT OF DESPONDENCY. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance."

First: He *inquired into the reason*. "Why art thou cast down?" Why stoop as if beneath a heavy weight? Why disquieted like the troubled sea? There must be some cause. Let me ascertain it.

Secondly: He *resolved upon the remedy*. "Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him." Trust in Him, for I shall yet praise Him for "the help of His countenance." His countenance, which now seems to me hidden and in frowns, will yet beam benignantly, and I shall be happy again.

Subject: Soul Sorrows and Soul Reliefs.

"O my God, my soul is cast down within me:
Therefore will I remember Thee from the land of Jordan, and of the
Hermonites,
From the hill Misar.

Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts;
 All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me.
 Yet the Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime,
 And in the night His song shall be with me,
 And my prayer unto the God of my life,
 I will say unto God my rock, Why hast Thou forgotten me?
 Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?
 As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me;
 While they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?
 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within
 me?
 Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him,
 Who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

—PSALM xlii. 6-11.

ANNOTATIONS: Ver. 6.—"*O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember Thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.*" "*My God, my soul is troubled in me: therefore do I remember Thee, from the land of Jordan and the Hermons, and the small mountain.*"—Hengstenberg. "The land of Jordan of itself may mean the cis-Jordanic as well as the trans-Jordanic land. We must not regard this designation as separate, but must view it in connection with the following, "*and of the Hermons.*" Hermon represents also, in Psalm lxxxix. 12, the trans-Jordanic region, as Tabor the cis-Jordanic: "*Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Thy name.*" That the Psalmist was situated, not precisely on Hermon, but only generally in the trans-Jordanic region—that we are hence perfectly justified in thinking here of David's sojourn at Mahanaim on the further side of Jordan, to the north of Jabbok, upon the boundaries of the tribes Gad and Manasseh,—is clear, not only from the mention of Jordan, but also from the plural, "*the Hermons.*"

Ver. 7.—"*Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts.*" —One flood of suffering appeared to him to invite another to pour itself on his head. "*Thy waterspouts.*" Literally, Thy water channels (2 Sam. vi. 8). "*Thy billows are gone over me.*" I am as one lying on the beach, while billow after billow breaks over me.

Ver. 8.—"*Yet the Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.*" "By day will Jehovah command His mercy, and by night His song with me, a prayer to the God of my life. Notwithstanding his distresses he is still convinced that God has not forsaken him. By day and night some understand prosperity and adversity; but they are probably put together to denote all time, the opposition between song and prayer being merely rhythmical, i.e., occasioned by the parallelism."—Alexander.

Ver. 9.—"*I will say unto God my rock, Why hast Thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?*" He

resolves in the midst of his troubles to appeal to the God of strength, the Rock, and to find out from Him the cause of his sore distress.

Ver. 10.—“*As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me.*”—Bones express the inmost part; and the reproaches of his enemies were to him as a piercing sword to his body. “*While they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?*” “Their reproach was, that his present situation refuted his pretension to a filial relation to God as his God. What gave the reproach this sting was, it found an echo in the breast of the sufferer. His suffering seemed to be the expression of God’s displeasure at his sins. He therefore prays God to take away this reproach by delivering him from his present situation.”

ARGUMENT.—The Psalmist here takes his last look from the hills whither he was driven, and which bounded his country. He is overwhelmed with grief, yet declares his hope and trust in God.

HOMILETICS.—This psalm gives us an insight into soul sorrows and soul reliefs.

I. SOUL SORROWS. The troubles of David’s heart at the time are here represented—

First: *As oppressive.* “O my God, my soul is cast down within me.” They seemed to rest upon his heart as lead. Beneath their weight he sank down into darkness and despair. How often the soul falls prostrate beneath its load of grief and trials. All godly souls have their Gethsemanes, on whose cold dark ground they fall in writhing agony.

Secondly: *As tumultuous.* “Deep calleth unto deep.” One sorrow seldom comes alone. “Trials,” says our dramatist, “come in battalions.” How often the soul feels itself like a frail bark on a boiling ocean, with clouds overhead breaking into torrents. In the hour of deep conviction for sin, there comes a moral inundation. The flood gates of the great deep are broken up, and amidst the roar and surges of its sorrows it cries, “Lord, save, or I perish.”

Thirdly: *As excruciating.* “As with a sword in my bones mine enemies reproach me.” As the physical nerves quiver with agony at the entrance of the sword, so his soul writhed at the reproaches of ungodly men.

The great sufferings the human soul is capable of enduring, reveal the amazing greatness of its capacity and the depths of its moral guiltiness; for under the administration of an all-

wise, all-holy, almighty God, great suffering evermore implies great sin.

II. SOUL RELIEFS. Some of the reliefs that the suffering soul has at its disposal are here indicated. What are they?

First: *Memory*. "I will remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar." "I will remember Thee." Here away an exile in the awful solitude of nature, I will call to memory Thy kindness to my race and myself in days that are gone. The remembrance of God's past kindness to us is a wonderful relief in great sorrow. I think of Thy goodness of old in dividing this river of Jordan for Thy chosen people, and here in Hermon Thy mercy in crushing Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, the king of Bashan. Another soul relief is—

Secondly: *Hope*. "The Lord will command His loving-kindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me." He believed that his Maker would soon hush the storm and command a blessed calm. I hope for His merciful interposition, and it will come to me, and in the day time and the night continually His song shall be with me. "His song," a song of exultant gratitude which I will sing, but which He will inspire and accept. "Hope," says a modern writer, "is like the sun, which, as we journey towards it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us." What an antidote is hope! Another soul relief is—

Thirdly: *Prayer*. "My prayer is unto the God of my life. I will say unto God my rock, Why hast Thou forgotten me?" God of my life, God from whom I derive my existence, who claims my existence. God my rock, my strength, my support, my resting-place, to Him I pray.

What comfort comes with prayer. The burdened soul, in the conscious presence of God, feels its burden fall away. Another soul relief is—

Fourthly: *Self-fellowship*. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" etc. "David," says Calvin, "represents himself here as divided into two parts. In so far as he rests through faith in God's promises, he raises himself, equipped with the

spirit of an invincible valour against the feelings of the flesh, and at the same time blames his weakness." David here does two things, (1) inquires of his own soul the cause of his own sorrows; and (2) exhorts it to trust in God. "Hope thou in God." God is the "health of my countenance;" that is, the salvation of my countenance. This means, He will clear away all the gloom that lays over my face, and make it bright with the sunshine of His love. The soul can relieve itself often by self-communion. A power which it has and which distinguishes it from all other mundane existences. It can withdraw itself from the outer world, retire into the chambers of its own nature, and there work in order to relieve its own burden, invigorate its energies, and brighten its hopes.

Sermonic Glances at the Gospel of St. John.

As our purpose in the treatment of this Gospel is purely the development, in the briefest and most suggestive form, of Sermonic outlines, we must refer our readers to the following works for all critical inquiries into the author and authorship of the book, and also for any minute criticisms on difficult clauses. The works we shall especially consult are:—"Introduction to New Testament," by Bleak; "Commentary on John," by Tholuck; "Commentary on John," by Hengstenberg; "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels," by Westcott; "The Gospel History," by Ehrard; "Our Lord's Divinity," by Liddon; "St. John's Gospel," by Coestersee; "Doctrine of the Person of Christ," by Dörner; Lange; etc., etc.

**Subject: Christ's two Discourses at the Feast of
Tabernacles.**

(Continued from Vol. X., Editor's Series, p. 344.)

"Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill Me? The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill Thee? Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the Sabbath-day circumcise a man. If a man on

the Sabbath-day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at Me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath-day? Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this He, whom they seek to kill? But, lo, He speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit we know this man whence He is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is. Then cried Jesus in the temple as He taught, saying, Ye both know Me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true, whom ye know not. But I know Him: for I am from Him, and He hath sent Me. Then they sought to take Him: but no man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come."—JOHN vii. 19-30.

EXPOSITION: Ver. 19.—"*Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill Me?*" Why seek ye to kill Me? They professed to believe in Moses. The law of Moses prohibited murder. "Thou shalt not kill" was one of its salient, sovereign, edicts; hence Christ's question, Why seek ye to kill Me? Where is your consistency?

Ver. 20.—"*The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill Thee?*" The "people;" not the rulers, but the mixed multitude. These by implication deny any desire to kill Him, and charge Him with madness for supposing it. "Thou hast a devil." Probably this was a proverbial expression, denoting gloominess, melancholy, brooding suspiciousness. Perhaps they meant to say, If Thou wert not mentally diseased, Thou wouldest not suppose that we intended to kill Thee. Mayhap these mixed multitudes had no intention to kill Him, and were ignorant of the malicious purpose of their rulers.

Ver. 21.—"*Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.*" Christ disregards the interruption, and proceeds to show that there was no reason for them, as believers in Moses, to be indignant with Him for the miracle He had wrought on the Sabbath-day. The "one work" at which they did "marvel" was undoubtedly the miracle He performed on the Sabbath at Bethesda, as recorded in chapter fifth, verses second to ninth. Why should this "one work" offend them, for He had done many works? The reason was, because it was wrought on the Sabbath-day.

Ver. 22, 23.—"*Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it*

18 *Sermonic Glances at the Gospel of St. John.*

ts of Moses, but of the fathers :) and ye on the Sabbath-day circumsise a man. If a man on the Sabbath-day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at Me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath-day?" Every male child was circumcised on the eighth day after birth; and this eighth day would, of course, frequently fall on the Sabbath. Moses enjoined the circumcision, although the ordinance was of much higher antiquity, reaching back to the patriarchs. The argument of Jesus is this:—If it be right to perform such an external ceremony as circumcision on the eighth day, as you are bound to admit it was; it certainly cannot be wrong to perform an act of benevolence upon a poor suffering man; nay, it is more justifiable, for the one is a work of mutilation, the other of restoration. The law of benevolence transcends ceremonialism, and sets it at defiance. "I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath-day." Glorious work!—the complete restoration of a man!

Ver. 24.—"*Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.*" Righteous judgment would justify the act; but righteous judgment cannot be always reached by appearances. A right judgment requires penetration into the moral meaning or spirit of the deed; and in this case, the spirit of the act being benevolence, was right in the Divinest sense.

Ver. 25.—"*Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this He, whom they seek to kill?*" These Jerusalemites seemed more favourably disposed towards Christ than the "people" mentioned in verse, the twenty-third. They seem to be mere on-lookers acquainted with the murderous designs of the rulers.

Ver. 26.—"*But, lo, He speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?*" They seem, "as an ultra party, to be solicitous even over the circumsppection of the rulers, and to treat it with irony. They follow their ironical expression with their own judgment, which breathes the haughtiness of the citizens of a hierarchical capital. As the Rabbis reproached the Lord with His lack of a regular education and graduation, these Jerusalemites cast up against Him His mean extraction."—*Lange*.

Ver. 27.—"*Howbeit we know this man whence He is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is.*" In the Old Testament there are passages, such as Isaiah liii. 8; Micah v. 2, which convey the idea that the origin of the Messiah would be wrapped in mystery. Hence they mean to say that, inasmuch as they knew His origin, He could not be the true Messiah.

Ver. 28.—"*Then cried Jesus in the temple as He taught, saying, Ye both know Me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true, whom ye know not.*" Christ seems to have raised His voice above their disputatious din, and boldly avows His Divine mission. "Ye both know Me, and ye know whence I am."

Very likely you know My birthplace, My parentage, and earthly history; but though you know My human side, you are ignorant of the Divine. "I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true, whom ye know not." You know whence My human body came, but you know not whence I came. I came from God, and you know Him not.

Ver. 29.—"*But I know Him: for I am from Him, and He hath sent Me.*" His counsels, though unknown to you, are known to Me. "I am from Him." My origin and My commission are Divine.

Ver. 30.—"*Then they sought to take Him: but no man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come.*" So exasperated were they at the bold avowal of His Divinity, that they sought to seize Him at once. Yet some mysterious force held them back. "No man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come." "His hour," that is, the time of His death.

HOMILETICS.—To gather all the verses together in order to illustrate some one subject of thought suited for public discourse, is a purpose which we feel to be important, but yet not a little difficult. The reigning passion of the various classes which Christ now addressed, and with which He in His remarks mainly contended, was a desire to kill Him. "Why go ye about to kill me?" With this He starts His address; and then the Jerusalemites inquire, "Is not this He whom they seek to kill?" As if they had said, We know a mortal malignity towards some one reigns in the heart of our rulers; is this the person? The following remarks are suggested concerning the malignant passion that now reigned amongst the rulers of the Jews.

I. This desire to kill Him WAS INCONSISTENT WITH THEIR RELIGIOUS PROFESSION. They were all confessedly believers in Moses. His authority was supreme, his word was their law, he was their religious leader, their chief lawgiver, their illustrious prophet. But there was nothing in Moses that would sanction their malignant antagonism to Christ.

First: The *spirit* of their opposition was inconsistent with the moral law of Moses. "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?" You seek to kill Me, when the man whom you regard as your chief moral master has distinctly and in God's own name said, "Thou shalt not kill." None of you keepeth

the law of Moses in this respect. Your malice towards Me is in direct opposition to the mandates of Moses.

Secondly: The *proximate cause* of the opposition was inconsistent with the moral law of Moses. That which seemed to have exasperated them on this occasion was the healing of the impotent man at Bethesda on the Sabbath-day. This was the "one work," the particular work of His numerous performances which now fired their indignation. He gave perfect restoration to a suffering man on the Sabbath day; this was His offence. But what did Moses do? Moses did what might have been considered something more objectionable than this. He circumcised children on the Sabbath day—a work that inflicted a considerable amount of physical pain and a great deal of manual labour. And not only did Moses do it, but your illustrious fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose authority is of greater antiquity, did the same. Could it be right for Moses and your fathers to do all this work on the Sabbath-day, the work of mere ceremony, and wrong for Me to do a work of mercy? The crime and curse of religionists in all ages and lands have been, the exalting the ceremonial over the moral—the local, the temporary, and contingent above the universal, eternal, and the absolute.

II. This desire to kill Him IMPLIED A GREAT INACCURACY OF JUDGMENT. "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." Judging from appearance, they concluded—

First: *That a mere ordinary peasant had no divine mission.* Some of them, perhaps most of them, knew His humble birth-place and parentage, and concluded from His lowly appearance that He was a poor man and nothing more. They were too blinded to discover beneath such apparently abject forms a Divine spirit, character, and mission. It has ever been so. Men who judge from appearances have always failed to discern anything great or Divine in those who occupy the humbler walks of life. And yet the men of highest genius, the greatest intellect, divinest inspirations and aims have

been counted by their contemporaries as the offscouring of all things. Judging from appearance, they concluded—

Secondly: *That a ritualistic religion was a religion of righteousness.* Had there been in connection with the ceremonies of the Temple the healing of the sick on the Sabbath-day, they would have esteemed the work as highly sacred. None of the ceremonies of their ritualistic religion could they regard as of doubtful or even secondary importance. But the religion of ritualism is not always the religion of righteousness; sometimes it is the religion of immorality. When men attend even to the divinest ceremonies of religion merely as a matter of custom or form, they degrade their own spiritual natures and insult Omniscience. "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." The religion of righteousness is the religion of love, not of law. Judging from appearance, they concluded—

Thirdly: *That by killing a teacher they would kill his influence.* Why did the Jews and the rulers seek to kill Christ? Because of the doctrines He proclaimed—doctrines which not only clashed with their prejudices, but struck against their greed, popularity, and influence. They knew that if His doctrines spread, their authority would crumble, and from the elevated seat of Moses they would pass into scenes of social degradation. Hence they thought that by killing Him they would kill His doctrines. Men who have judged from appearance have ever thought so, hence they have martyred unpopular teachers. But facts, as well as philosophy, show that such judgment is not a "righteous judgment." The blood of the martyrs has always been the seed of the Church. The doctrines of a true teacher get fire, force, and sweep by inflicting on him a martyr's death. Christ's death was as a grain of corn that fell into the earth, there grew, spread, multiplied a thousandfold, and will multiply for ever. Do not judge by appearances. "Things are not what they seem."^{*}

^{*} See a Homily on this subject. *Homilist*, Editor's Series, vol. i., page 80.

III. The desire to kill Him INVOLVED THEM IN PERPLEXITY. "Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this He whom the seek to kill? But, lo, He speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit we know this man whence He is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is," There seems much confusion and bewilderment here. They thought they knew Him, yet they felt they did not know Him. They wondered, too, how a man whom their rulers desired to kill should speak so boldly without being arrested at once by them. Minds under a wrong leading passion are sure to get into confusion. A corrupt passion spreads a deep haze over the whole region of intellect, and makes its path intricate and perplexing. No moral spirit can have its intellectual region clear and bright, and its path straight and sunny, that is not under the control of benevolent dispositions. All the conflicting theories of the world concerning God, spirit, and morals, have their origin in a wrong state of heart. The intellectual confusion of hell grows out of malevolence.

What they could not see, Christ explains. "Then cried Jesus in the temple as He taught, saying, Ye both know Me and ye know whence I am; and I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true, whom ye know not." As they had no love in them, they could not see God; and as they could not see God they could not understand Him that He came from God and was sent by Him. Observe what Christ asserts—

First: That He *knows* the Absolute. He is the only Being in the universe that knows Him. Secondly: That He was a *messenger* from the Absolute. "He that sent me." This is the great spiritual ministry of the world. What are popes, cardinals, archbishops, to Him? "This is My beloved Son," says God, "hear ye Him." Whoever else you disregard, "hear ye Him."

IV. Their desire to kill Him WAS DIVINELY RESTRAINED. "Then they sought to take Him: but no man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come." Why did not their malignant desire work itself out at once? It was wide

and strong enough: it glowed in all the breasts of the rulers of the nation, and perhaps in not a few of the men of Jerusalem and the general population of the country. Why did they not at once seize Him and strike the fatal blow? The answer is, "because His hour was not yet come." There was an unseen hand that held them back. He who holds the wind in His fist and the waters in the hollow of His hand turns the hearts of men as the rivers of water. With God, for "everything there is a season." Man may wish to hurry events and to go before the appointed time, but there is a power that holds them back until the hour comes. The power that governs every wavelet in the ocean, controls every passing passion of mankind. "There is a power unseen that rules the illimitable world."

CONCLUSION: Learn—

First: That being hated by society is not *always a proof of hate-worthiness*. Here is One, "who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, holy, harmless, undefiled," hated with a mortal hate. To be hated by a corrupt society, is to have the highest testimony to your moral purity and goodness. The world loves its own and hates all moral aliens. It worships the Herods as gods, and stones the Stephens as wretches unfit to live. "Marvel not if the world hate you, it hated Me before it hated you." Learn—

Secondly: That being hated by society is no *reason for neglecting our Mission*. Though Christ knew that in the leading men of Jerusalem there flamed the fiercest fires of indignation towards Him, yet to Jerusalem He goes, enters the Temple on a great public occasion, and fearlessly delivers His Divine message. That love for truth, God, and humanity, which inspired and ruled the heart of Christ, raised Him above the fear of men, made Him fearless and invincible in the prosecution of His mission.

Germs of Thought.

The Illustrious Visitor.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."—Rev. iii. 20.

LUKEWARMNESS is the great charge preferred by our blessed Lord against the Church at Laodicea. In very striking terms He expresses His detestation of such a condition, and in stirring words arouses the Church to renewed effort, that there may be a recovery of spiritual strength, and that, cloaked in beautiful garments, she may go boldly and gladly forth on her mission in the world. Lest the Church should think that her case was hopeless, and that her Lord had rebuked her in anger, the sweet assurance is given, "as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." And to show the sincerity of the entreaty and exhortation He not only *calls* to the Church at Laodicea, but He *comes* to its door, and *knocks* as well as *calls*; and He awakens attention to the fact,—"*Behold*"—look, I am here, I send, and I come, I am intensely in earnest, I am not lukewarm, I am anxious to make your hearts my home.

Many of our Churches, alas! are in a state of lukewarmness to-day; and He who walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks has a message of reproof and exhortation to deliver by His servants; and "he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." In using the text for homiletical purposes, let us notice these two things as taught therein—the *great kindness of the Redeemer to man*, and the *great unkindness of man to the Redeemer*.

I. THE GREAT KINDNESS OF THE REDEEMER TO MAN. "Behold I stand at the door and knock," etc. Here is—(a) *Compassion for man*. The Saviour knew how sad and sorrowful the condition of Laodicea was; He knew that condition was likely to get worse and worse, and, moved with compassion, He comes, not

in anger, but in love, not to strike angrily at the door, but to *stand* and *wait* and *knock*. And that is how the Saviour comes to the hearts of all men; He is moved with compassion for their sorrowful and sinful state, and He desires to do them good. He *comes* and *stands* and *knocks*, in pity and patience and tenderness, and is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (β) *Condescension to man*. Just think for a moment who it was who thus came and stood and knocked. It was none other than He whom John saw in celestial glory in the opening vision of this book. Jesus, the mighty God, come to men! stoops to earth's low level! and condescends to stand and knock at the door of human hearts! How true it is, that He is the "same Jesus" as ascended from Olivet! the same Jesus as once stooped even to wash His disciples' feet, and to entreat men to come unto Him that they might have life! The words of the text also promise—(γ) *Communion with man*. The Saviour does not come as a stranger, He comes as a friend and a guest. If the door be opened in response to His knock, He will enter and make Himself at home, and will sup with us, and we with Him. Now, this is in keeping with the character of the Redeemer when He was manifest in the flesh; then, He received sinners and ate with them, and now He comes to commune with us, and to communicate to us peace and pardon and joy. Our bodies are to become temples of the Holy Ghost; and the office of the Holy Ghost is to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us. The kindness of the Saviour is further seen in that He promises the (δ) *Consummation of man*. The Redeemer enters our hearts to make them holy and happy—He takes possession of our spirits to make them perfect and glorious. If we yield ourselves up entirely to Him, we shall be translated into His divine likeness, and ultimately be translated into His divine glory. If we let Him into our hearts now, He will take us to heaven when the drill and discipline of earth are over, and we shall sit down with Him on His throne (v. 21). This will be *the perfecting of our humanity*, the *consummation* of all our best and brightest hopes and capacities. What kind-

ness the Saviour showed in offering all these things to the Church at Laodicea ! And He offers the same blessings now to all who will entertain Him in their hearts and acknowledge Him as their Prophet, Priest, and King.

Let us now notice—

II. THE GREAT UNKINDNESS OF MAN TO THE REDEEMER.

The words of the text imply the great reluctance of man to attend to the voice of the Saviour, and his natural unwillingness to let the heavenly visitor into his heart. When Jesus became incarnate, there was no room for Him in the inn—sad prophecy of the reluctant reception He has generally received from the children of men. Of course it is sin that closes the heart to the entrance of the Saviour. Let us examine the various forms this sin assumes, and in every instance we shall see ingratitude and *unkindness* very conspicuous :—(a) *Ignorance* is the cause in some cases why the visit of the Saviour is not welcomed. If the ignorance be involuntary and unavoidable, then it is not culpable ; but if it be the result of a voluntary refusal to know who the Saviour is, and what His knocking means—if it be a wilful shutting of the eyes and closing of the ears, then it shows great unkindness to the Redeemer, and is regarded by Him as a great sin. Another cause is (β) *Indifference*. Some know that it is the Saviour standing at the door of their hearts,—they can hear His knock and voice ; but they are so absorbed with other engagements, they are so careless about the unseen and eternal, that they let Him stand outside, and make no effort to let Him in. They procrastinate, and treat the wonderful visitor with the basest unkindness. Another cause is (γ) *Unbelief*. Some hear and know and profess not to be indifferent ; but they say, “We do not believe in the Saviour and His mission, we do not believe in the invitations of the Gospel.” Unbelief bars and bolts the doors of the heart, and in the most cruel way refuses to let the Redeemer in. (δ) *Prejudice* is another cause of the unkindness of man to the Redeemer. When the Saviour was upon our earth, prejudice led men to reject Him. The Jews had their preconceived notions, and because the Messiah did not

come up to them, they refused to have Him to reign over them; and the same sin has been repeated ever since. There are multitudes refusing to let the Redeemer into their hearts because His coming to the world, His conduct in it, and departure from it, do not accord with their ideas of how things ought to have been. The Cross is an offence to many; they re-echo the cry of the mockers at Calvary—"Come down from the cross, that we may see and believe." Prejudice blinds the eyes and hardens the heart and prevents man seeing Jesus as He really is,—“the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely.” The last cause of unkindness we will mention is (*e*) *Ingratitude*. If man appreciated rightly God's “unspeakable gift,”—if man valued as he should do the infinite condescension of the Redeemer,—he would at once respond to the entreaty of so great a friend and let Him into his heart, to be the God of his love and life; but man is an *ungrateful creature*, ungrateful to God for His great temporal gifts, and ungrateful especially to Christ for His redeeming love. Christ comes to man with His heart and hands full of blessing; and yet how few accept His offers, listen to His voice, and entertain Him in their souls!

F. W. BROWN.

Subject: Solemn News.

“There is but a step between me and death.”—1 SAM. xx. 8.

DAVID was pursued by no ordinary foe. He was exposed to the wrath of a jealous and unscrupulous king, who in a sort of demoniacal phrensy sought to take away his life. Such is the uncertainty of life and the

“Dangers standing thick through all the ground,
To push us to the tomb,”

that we may take these chastening words, without comment or alteration, and apply them to ourselves individually. “There is but a step.” Notice the views and feelings that will naturally possess a man who believes “there is but a step between him and death,” or that his end is near.

I. The world, with its pleasures, pursuits, and prospects, will appear small. The mask is taken off now. It may have allured and deceived him in the past, led him away from duty and God to nights of sleepless anxiety or debauch; but its charms are lost, its spell is broken.

II. He will feel that his own personal salvation is to him above all things else in point of importance. He is honest in prayer and looking into his own heart—no mental reservation as he consecrates himself to God. He feels that a failure here would wreck him in all the lofty purposes of his being.

III. Next to his own salvation in point of importance, will be that of his family. Neither his precept nor example will lead them astray. Just here unconverted parents fail to discharge their duty to their children. Their efforts all terminate on the merely man-ward side of their nature; rich, smart, educated, good-looking, well-dressed, and highly honoured—they desire no more than this. They fail to seek the well-being of the immortal nature. Their interest in them, therefore, is more like that common instinct by which doves cleave to their mates and swallows provide for their young, than that generous watchful care which parents should experience for immortal natures awfully hovering in a state of probation, just poisoning in the balance for heaven or hell.

IV. He will not feel at home in the company of the wicked, or in any pursuit or pleasure upon which he could not ask the blessing of God. His conversation will be seasoned with grace, his conduct upright and virtuous.

Many professing Christians who admit the nearness of death, do not think or feel thus. They plead for things in moderation. "We must have some pleasure and amusement; we denounce excess, but believe in moderation." Hence they go foraging over on the devil's ground in pursuit of pleasure and amusement. You will find them at the ball-room, the card table, and the horse-race. Some of them you may find at the midnight hour in the bar-room. One of them you may see wrought up to the pitch of the roaring lion; another exhibiting the heaviness of the sleeping ox; while a

third is reduced to the filthiness of the vomiting dog. Here is what becomes of moderation in all these matters. A man who believes "there is but a step between him and death," will feel himself ill at ease in such company and places.

V. He will desire to settle all disputes and old grudges, and forgive his enemies. He sees from a new stand-point now. His own insults and rebellion against God, all of which are freely forgiven, make it easy for him now to "forgive a brother his trespasses." A thorough belief in the nearness of death would work wonders in allaying strife and quarrels in families and communities. How sad to see members of the same Church, for some little trifling cause, alienated from each other, and every day making a wider breach between them. I know some professing Christians who remind me of incarnate devils in the matter of forgiveness. They don't know what the word forgiveness means, I fear, either from God to themselves, or from themselves to an offending brother.

VI. A man who believes "there is but a step between him and death," will desire to make his *will*. I have no advice to give as to the disposition of your earthly property. But you have property that does not belong to earth. I beseech you therefore to bequeath your self, body, soul, and spirit, to Christ. Don't postpone the matter, for "there is but a step." Let your last will and testament present you; "a living sacrifice to God, which is your reasonable service." Are not the views and feelings I have now mentioned proper, nay, almost inseparable from a man who believes that his end is near? Then, are they not proper for us? We are not fastened to a sick bed by a lingering or wasting illness; but this makes our life in one sense all the more precarious, for we are exposed to dangers to which the sick are not. Many go out in the morning for business or pleasure, and are brought home in their coffins. God help us to feel that "there is but a step between us and death," and to act accordingly.

Movers, N.G.

THOS. KELLY.

SERMONIC NOTES ON THE VISIONS OF EZEKIEL.

No. XVIII.

Subject: The Vision of Gog and Magog: The Church's Struggle with the World.

Chapters xxxviii., xxxix.

WE have already seen a vision of the Church's revival, and a vision of the Church's reunion. But the Church revived and reunited will, nevertheless, be the Church at war, for the Church on earth was rightly called by our fathers "the Church militant."

A fearful apparition passes before Ezekiel,—an apparition of the state of fierce hostility of the heathen world to the Jewish people. Exquisite as is the beauty and the calm that he has seen gathering upon the revived and reunited nation, he finds now their conflicts are by no means over. The embattled forces of paganism are marshalling from far-distant territories against them. He sees them break into a terrific struggle with the Jews; but the issue is certain. The arm of heathenism will be completely broken, and the Jew will be conqueror over the nations. This vision does not predict any historic details that will be literally fulfilled. It may point to some special events, but by no means exclusively. True, Ezekiel here sees an incursion into Palestine, gathering as a huge cloud, and bursting in a tremendous storm, of vast northern barbarian hordes; so Habbakuk had seen them "galloping on horses terrible as themselves"; so Zephaniah had seen them "prowling round the sanctuary of Ascalon, and through the cities of Philistia"; so Jeremiah had seen them as "a seething cauldron in the north, whence fiery floods of desolation would surge forth."—But that Ezekiel's vision was not exclusively of any specific event, but rather of the general antagonism of heathendom to the Hebrew faith and people,—an antagonism showing itself in a long succession of events, and probably finally manifesting itself in a tragic climax,—I think Dr. Fairbairn plainly shows. For he notes (1) The name given to the *leader* of the hostile forces, Gog.

It is an ideal name, simply the root of Magog, the only related name known in history, itself the name of a very indefinite territory and people. The Apocalypse of St. John treats this name freely as an ideal name, identifying Gog and Magog with the heathen in the four quarters of the earth. (2) The unlikely *combination* of the hostile forces. The nations named in the confederation are remote from the land of Israel, and remote from each other. They are little likely to act in concert, for they occupy the most distant territories of the then known world. (3) The exaggerated *number* in the hostile forces. Myriads upon myriads are to be gathered to spoil and plunder a little land,—a land that could have been conquered by a handful of their number, and which could not have maintained a tithe of the myriads described for a single day. (4) The imaginary *trophies* from the hostile forces. The wood of their weapons was to serve as fuel for Israel seven years, and their dead were to be seven years in being buried. This has been computed to mean that there must have been three hundred and sixty million of corpses; and who could live while such putrefaction was going on? (5) *Parallel* descriptions, in other prophets, of this struggle of the hostile forces with the Jews, so vary the locality of the battle that they can only be understood when interpreted as figures.

Now in this vision of the heathen struggle with the Hebrews, there is surely a universal and permanent teaching. We understand this as we read Paul's commentary on Isaiah. For what is meant by the Jew conquering the nations, if it does not point to Him who was the Seed of Abraham, who was David's Son and Lord, who was to be the mightiest of the earth, who goes forth conquering and to conquer, in whom all nations are to be blessed, who, whilst the Redeemer of the world, had truly inscribed on His cross "The King of the Jews." Or, again, is not the Hebrew nation the type of the Christian Church? And that Church, in whose worship, activities, and life Christ is, is destined to endure the onslaughts of the world, and finally to overcome them. To the Church, not as

identical with or exactly represented by any of the Churches, but as comprising the faithful found in all of them, it is given to be in perpetual war with evil, and to overcome evil with good. This vision, taken as suggesting this familiar truth, illustrates concerning the Church's struggle with the world,—

I. THE STRIFE.

And the picture, painted so vividly by the prophet, shows that this strife is (1) *Fiercely aggressive*. The army, horses, and horsemen come against the mountains of Israel. Here is distinct incursion, deliberate invasion. We may notice that only the weakest and scarcely living forms either of good or evil lack this aggressive spirit. Where there is life, there is the activity of the invader. Wherever Christ is, He says, "I come to bring a sword." Christliness is ever seeking to make inroads, advances upon the enemy's camp. And it is so with all the stronger genius of evil. To-day, such forces as Mammon, Luxury, Intemperance, with hosts besides, are attacking the Church, are setting themselves "against the mountains of Israel." Then they are (2) *Insidious*. The foe is represented as saying, "I will go up to the land of unwallled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely." To the child, to the man, who is an unwallled village, Christ's voice peals with awful earnestness, "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch." Even brave and mighty Achilles was slain because his heel had not been dipped in the brine whose water made men invulnerable. Then look at the enemies of the Church as (3) *Widespread*. They come from *every quarter*: from the east, as it were from Persia; from the far north, as from Togarmah. So evil influences attack you from governments and from markets, from your library and from your business, from your own appetites and from hell. They come in *vast multitudes*; "a great company," "a storm," "a cloud to cover the land." So do the assaults on our purity, our nobler ambitions, our unselfish services, our devout faith, continually come. And then the struggle is (4) *Terrible*. The convulsion that sent a universal shudder through all living things, is but an image of the bewilderment of mind, the

throes of spirit, that in some of the fierce hours of temptation human souls experience. And in those awful convulsions of temptation, who has not known some of the Church's lights quenched, some of its pillars shaken to the ground? But we pass on to notice,—

II. THE VICTORY.

Here the first grand truth to be realized is, that it is (1) *Divinely wrought*. God says to the foes of the Church, "I am against thee," and again, and yet again, says and shows, "I am against thee." No wonder then that there is (2) *Overwhelming destruction of evil*. This is achieved by (i.) Internal strife. "Every man's sword shall be against his brother." So every sin is a sword against some other sin; the passions war with each other. Bad men are each other's foes. A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, much less can it triumph over a united kingdom, such as the true Church is described as being. And there is besides (ii.) Direct agency of God. He sends His hail and fire. The forces of nature and of providence are against the Church's foes. But they are for the Church; for the vision of John shows "that the earth helped the woman." And hence it comes to pass that there is (3) *Complete flourishing of the good*. Probably the vision predicts a culminating point in this struggle. Many a thoughtful man thinks that now he sees the world's battle thickening for that hour, the holy war ripening to that crisis. Be that as it may. Far off, or drawing very near, the day shall dawn when, in perfect safety, unmolested triumph, without even the chill of a shadow of fear, the good shall dwell in the very light of the Face of God. This struggle is now going on; this victory is to be our aim and hope.

Bristol.

URIJAH R. THOMAS.

The Preacher's Finger-Post.

Subject: THE SOUL'S DOUBLE APPEAL.

"Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man. For Thou art the God of my strength: why dost Thou cast me off? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise Thee, O God my God. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."—PSALM xliii. 1-6.

This Psalm stands in very close relation to the preceding one already noticed.* Both are so evidently the expression of the same mind under the same set of circumstances that some expositors have suggested that they should not have been divided. The Psalm contains a double appeal—

I. An appeal to God. The appeal to Heaven here is for three things.

First: For Divine *Vindication*. "Plead my cause against an ungodly nation." The "ungodly nation" refers in all probability to David's

own country, which for the time had cast him off and accepted Absalom his son in his stead. Delitzsch translates "ungodly nation," unmerciful people. For a vindication against these false charges, he appeals to the eternal Judge. "Judge me, Elohim, and plead my cause against an unmerciful people." Deep in the conscience of all men is the tendency to appeal to Heaven for justice when suffering from the tongue of slander and groundless accusations. There is a Vindicator in the universe that will one day appear for suffering innocence. "I know that my Vindicator liveth."

Secondly: For Divine *deliverance*. "O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man." Does he refer here to Doeg or Ahithophel? It matters not. Deceitful and unjust men were not wanting in his midst, they were plentiful then as now, there in Palestine as here in England. He wishes to be rescued from them, delivered at once from the wrongs they inflicted and from the spirit which inspired them. "Thou art the God of my strength," and Thou canst deliver me.

Thirdly: For Divine *information*. "Why dost Thou cast me off?" Whilst my

* See page 9.

suffering has come directly from my enemies, yet they have acted not only by Thy permission, but with the strength and opportunity which Thou hast afforded. Why didst Thou allow it? Thou couldst have crushed them in a moment, why allow them the power to torment me? I know it is from Thy chastening rod; what in me is the offence? "Search me, O Lord, and try my ways."

Fourthly: For Divine guidance. "O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles." I crave for the scenes of public worship, I want to scale the holy hill and enter once more the sanctuary of God. O guide me thither. I see not my way back. There is a thick darkness over me. "O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me." But why did he wish to go once more to the old scenes of worship? To meet his friends there? To indulge in ritualistic observances? No. To exult in God. "Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy." He would be glad to walk the streets of the holy city once more, to climb the heights of Mount Zion, to survey again the grand and beautiful scenery all around. But these things did not stimulate his prayer. He desired to

go there to meet with God, to rejoice in the presence of his Maker. The grandest places in the universe are nothing to a devout soul without God. His presence is the only heaven. The Psalm contains—

II. An appeal to SELF. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" etc. These words occur twice in the preceding Psalm. In this appeal the Psalmist shows that he was conscious of three things.

First: The *personality* of his soul. "Why art thou cast down?" He felt that the soul was not a mere element or attribute of his nature, but it was *himself*. He was conscious of—

Secondly: The *sorrow* of his soul. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" He felt it to be both oppressed and unrestful. Like a heavy-laden vessel about sinking, and the heaving sea never resting. He was conscious of—

Thirdly: The *interests* of his soul. "Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him."

CONCLUSION: Let us in our sorrows and trials, living in the midst of an "ungodly nation" and deceitful and unjust men, learn to look above to Heaven for help and even to our own souls in order to feel that God alone can help us. Who but God can help the sorrowing, struggling soul?

"The soul on earth is an immortal guest,
 Condemned to starve at an unreal feast;
 A spark which upwards tends by nature's force;
 A stream diverted from its parent source;
 A drop dissevered from the boundless sea;
 A moment, parted from eternity;
 A pilgrim panting for the rest to come;
 An exile anxious for his native home."—*Hannah More.*

Subject: EVERY WHIT WHOLE.

"I have made a man every whit whole."—JOHN vii. 23.

An explanation of the context will be found elsewhere.* We detach these words and take them to illustrate two subjects.

I. THE GREAT WANT OF MAN. What is his great want? To be made "whole." Man is unsound in every part.

First: He is *corporeally* unsound. Some men's physical organizations are healthier and haler than others; but even the strongest is unsound. The seeds of disease and death are in all. There is a canker worm gnawing at the vitals of the most robust. The strongest man is, as compared to the weakest, like an oak to a fragile reed; but ever at the roots of the oak there is a rotting disease that is working its way up.

Secondly: He is *intellectually* unsound. The man

who has the strongest mind is the subject of some mental infirmity. He lacks elasticity, freedom, clearness of vision, courage, and independency. He cannot see things completely, or hold them with a manly grasp. The strongest intellects are the most conscious of their unsoundness.

Thirdly: He is *socially* unsound. Socially men were made to love their fellow-men and to be loved by them, and thus be harmoniously united in reciprocal affection and services of mutual goodwill and usefulness. But it is not so. Socially man is unsound in every point. The social heart is diseased with greed, envy, jealousy, ambition, and malice. So that the social world is rife with discords, contentions, and wars.

Fourthly: He is *morally* unsound. Morally, man has lost at once the true idea of right and the true sympathy with right. His conscience is dim, infirm, torpid, buried in the flesh, carnally sold unto sin.

Thus man in every part is unsound. He is lost, not in the sense of being *missed*, for God knows where he is; nor in the sense of being *extinct*, for he lives a certain kind of life; not in the sense of being *inactive*, for he is in constant labour; but in the sense of *incapacity to fulfil the object of his being*. He is lost, in

* See page 16.

the sense that the gallant ship is lost when no longer seaworthy; that the grand organ is lost, that has no longer the power to pour out music.

We take these words to illustrate—

II. The GRAND WORK OF CHRIST. What is it? It is to make "man every whit whole." He makes man—

First: *Corporeally* whole. It is true that He allows the human body to go down to dust; but that dust He has pledged to re-organize. "These vile bodies shall be fashioned and made like unto His glorious body." "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption," etc., etc. How sound will the resurrection body be!

He makes man—

Secondly: *Intellectually* whole. Here He begins the healing of the intellect. He clears away from it the moral atmosphere of depravity, and opens its eyes so that it may see things as they are. Christ is working here to give man a sound intellect. In the future world it will be "every whit whole," free from prejudice, from errors, and from all the fogs of depravity. He makes man—

Thirdly: *Socially* whole. He restores men to social soundness by filling them with that spirit of true philanthropy which prompts them not to seek their own things but the things of each other,

and to labour for the common good of men as men, irrespective of creeds, countries, races, or religions. This He is doing now, this He will continue to do on this earth, until men shall love each other as brethren, and nations beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and hear of war no more. He will make the world, even here, "every whit" socially whole, and in the Heavenly Jerusalem above, the social soundness and order will be perfect. He makes man—

Fourthly: *Morally* whole. He will make man sound morally by bringing him under the control of supreme love for the Supremely Good. Thus: He will take away the heart of "stone," and give it a heart of "flesh." At last He will cause all men to stand before Him without "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

CONCLUSION: What a Physician is Christ! He cures all manner of diseases. No malady can baffle His skill. The world has never wanted men who have tried to make people sound. It has its corporeal doctors, intellectual doctors, social doctors, moral doctors; but those who succeed most in their respective departments only prove by their miserable failures that they are miserable empirics. Here is a Physician that makes a "man every whit whole."

Subject: THE PERSONAL HISTORY AND PUBLIC PURPOSE OF TRUE CONVERSION.

"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days."—Gal. i. 15-18.

Here is an autobiographic sketch of a great man. Paul was one of the greatest men that ever lived. Here is the record of the event that made him great. That event is *conversion*. Conversion, what is it? What stupid things are being written and preached about it every week. The world has come to regard it as a cant phrase of the saints. I take these words as a revelation of its true nature, and shall notice two things concerning it. Notice—

I. ITS PERSONAL HISTORY.

First: The *inner revelation of Christ to the soul*. "Revealed His Son in me." What is this event? What is the revelation of Christ in a man?

(1) It is something more than to have Him revealed to the *senses*. Christ was revealed while on this earth to the senses of His contemporaries and apostles; they saw, heard, and touched Him. He is revealed to the senses now

in certain churches, in sculpture, painting, *sensuous* hymns, and sermons.

(2) It is something more than to have Him revealed to the *understanding*. There is a theology that reveals Christ to the intellect; but the Christ of theology is not the Christ of God, any more than the sun of astronomy is the sun in the heavens.

(3) It is something more than to have Him revealed to the *conscience*. He may be so revealed to the conscience that the soul may regard Him not only as faultless, but as the sublimest ideal of moral excellence, and yet not be revealed in the man. To have the Son revealed to you, is to have Him in you as the *supreme good*, the *supreme truth* for the intellect, the *supreme right* for the conscience, the *supreme beauty* for the heart. It is—

Secondly: The *inner revelation of Christ to the soul through God*. "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me." This revelation of the Son could be referred to no other source. It could not be referred to his predisposition of mind, his educational training, nor to the ministry of any Christian teacher. God did it. He did it (1) By predetermination. "Separated me from my mother's womb." When I was not, nothing to the universe, and the universe nothing to me, God ordained

this. The Eternal never acts without a purpose, and His purpose is always eternal and benevolent. He did it (2) By sovereignty. "Called me by His grace." The sovereignty of a being is evermore the expression of his ruling disposition, the ruling disposition of God is love, hence sovereignty and love, when applied to Him, are convertible terms. Here then is the personal history of conversion. The inner revelation of the Son made by God Himself to the human soul. Notice—

II. **Its PUBLIC PURPOSE.** What was the object of his conversion? His own good simply? No. To make him useful to the world. "That I might preach Him among the heathen." God does not convert a man simply for his own sake, but for the sake of others. There is nothing in the universe made for itself. All things are made to render service. As an object of Divine influence, man is not an end, but a means. God reveals Christ to man in order that man may reveal Him to others. "Preach Him among the heathen." The light is not to be put under a bushel. As soon as this inner revelation took place—

First: He felt the *duty of preaching to be paramount*. "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." He became independent of all carnal considerations as to

worldly wealth, pleasure, influence. What things were gain to him he counted as loss. What conscience bade him do he did at once. "Immediately." The preacher who does not feel his obligation to preach paramount, mistakes and degrades his avocation.

Secondly: *He employed the best means for its efficient discharge.* "I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went to Jerusalem." Three years in Arabia gave him a splendid opportunity for study. Away from the din and bustle of civic life, in the deep solitude of majestic nature, he had probably those visions referred to 2 Cor. xii. By not returning to Jerusalem for three years after he had been preaching the gospel, he would give ample proof that he received not the gospel from man, neither was he taught it by man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. By spending "fifteen days" after with Peter at Jerusalem, he enjoyed a splendid opportunity of extending his Christian knowledge and quickening his Christian zeal.

CONCLUSION: Such then is conversion. It is such a revelation of God's love in the soul as to stimulate and qualify the man at once to go and reveal Him to the world.*

* Another sketch on a different plan on this subject will be found in *Homilist*, Series I., vol. vi., page 60.

SKETCHES FROM GENESIS.

No. 31.

Subject : THE PRISONERS' DREAMS.

"And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which were bound in the prison," etc.—GEN. xl 5-19.

WHILEST Joseph was still in prison, two of the king's servants offended against their master, and were cast into prison; and the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he had to serve them, being prisoners of some repute. One night the two prisoners dreamed each a dream, which they remembered in the morning; and great was their desire to know the interpretation of their dreams. Joseph undertook the task, and his interpretation was afterwards proved to be true.

I. THE DREAMERS.

1. They were in dishonour.

Once they occupied a somewhat exalted position in the court of Egypt. Though servants, their offices in those days were considered responsible, and a certain amount of dignity pertained to them. They had transgressed against the king, and were now undergoing a term of imprisonment. How changeable and fickle this world is! Those who once possessed a large estate and enjoyed the good

things of this world have often died in the union. Some who had worked their way to wealth and fame, who sat among the legislators of the earth, have ended their life in prison. Men whose words caused the nations of the earth to tremble, have had to abdicate their thrones and seek a refuge in a foreign land, where they found their graves. "Man in honour abideth not," is true of the human race in the aggregate, as well as of individuals. We have all fallen from our state of holiness and glory. Now we are prisoners, nevertheless prisoners of hope; and a remarkable dream was given us in the garden of Eden, the interpretation thereof is, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

2. They were in great mental distress.

They had been speaking perhaps the previous evening, before retiring to rest, of their imprisonment, asking one another what would be the end of it. They hoped the heart of Pharaoh would soon relent, and yet feared his anger. The dreams they had in the night they believed to have reference to their future. They knew not whether they were signs of good or evil, so they were

greatly distressed in their minds; and when Joseph saw them in the morning he immediately noticed that they were sad. Day dreams unfulfilled, cause great mental agony to persons in the present day; visions of wealth and renown have flashed across their minds, they know not whether they are to be realized or not, so they go along our streets and enter our places of business with downcast looks and sad countenances. When taking a higher view of this matter, the same truth is revealed unto us. When man comes in contact with the supernatural for the first time, he is somewhat terrified; the sinful nature is not at home in supernatural regions. When God's voice is heard, the conscience condemns the man, and the countenance soon reveals the heart's sadness and distress.

3. They were anxious to know the interpretation of their dreams. "And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it."

They doubtless remembered the diviners of dreams and the magicians of great skill and knowledge who belonged to their people; but they were not in the prison, and they were unable to get at them, so their distress was great at the thought that the import of the dreams was to be

kept from their knowledge. Joseph directed their attention to the God he worshipped, and they readily told Joseph their dreams, and he gave them the interpretation. Some of the troubles of life are freely revealed unto others; they belong not to the heavier class of distress, so we tell our acquaintances of them, and thus to a certain extent we find relief. But the inmost troubles of the soul we keep to God's ear alone. We long to have all the painful dreams of life interpreted; the darkness is sometimes very great, the uncertainty almost overwhelms us. God is the only One that can give us relief; the light which comes from heaven is the only one that can scatter the darkness, and make life's path clear before us. Ask God to come to your assistance to untie some of the hard, difficult knots you meet with on your way to the eternal world.

II. THE INTERPRETER.

1. He was full of sympathy with them in their trouble.

Joseph observed their sadness, and without any request from them, offered his services; their sad countenance touched a cord in his heart, he deeply felt for them. He had been in deep distress himself, and was now suffering, though innocent of the

charge brought against him, so he could sympathize with them. Some people are very ready to offer their sympathy to others who are in trouble; but it is so shallow as not to be worth the getting. It is ridiculous to hear a man who has never felt the pangs of hunger, whose wife and children are around him, telling his neighbour, whose wife has been suddenly snatched from his bosom, leaving seven or eight little ones behind her, who are frequently in want of their daily food, "I fully sympathize with you in your great trial." The man knows not what he says. We must know what it is to lose our beloved ones ourselves before we can fully enter into the feelings of those who mourn the loss of theirs. Sympathy is cheap in the estimation of small and unfeeling souls, but is of priceless value in the estimation of Heaven. The power to sympathize was dearly bought by the Redeemer. The tears and prayers of Gethsemane, the cruel betrayal with a kiss, the walking of the streets of Jerusalem with bleeding brow and back, the painful death of the cross, was not too great a price to pay for this divine-human power to sympathize with others. When the sadness of thine heart is deeper than the kind looks and the loving words

of thy friends can reach, think of the High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, inasmuch as He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

2. He was conscious of his ability to help them.

"Do not interpretations belong to God?"

He knew that the God he feared was able to tell the meaning of their dreams; and the union existing between him and God gave him the consciousness that he could interpret their dreams. It is only when united to God we can render real assistance to our fellow-creatures; apart from Him we are too weak to carry our own burdens, much less can we offer to bear our neighbour's burden. The sense of God's love and nearness imparts strength to our souls so as to enable us to be of service to others. The Divine is the great power which illumines human life; and as we ascend in the Divine, the abler we become to comfort, cheer, and help those who are battling with the storms of life.

3. He was in need of their assistance. "But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house."

This request was not too much. The chief butler would have many opportunities of mentioning Joseph's name unto the king; the remembrance of his prison life would naturally bring Joseph's name to his recollection. One might suppose he would never forget the interpreter of his dream; however, for two years no mention was made of Joseph's name. How often do we find instances of the same

thing in the present day; in prosperity the kindness shown in adversity is forgotten. We ought to be mutual helpers in this world; the one cannot live without the help of the other. When an opportunity presents itself for us to assist another, let us always avail ourselves of it; he may be of great assistance to us at some future time. CYMBO.

Falmouth.

IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER.—As every sacrifice was to be seasoned with salt, so every undertaking and every affliction of the creature must be sanctified with prayer; nay, as it sheweth the excellency of gold, that it is laid upon silver itself, so it speaketh the excellency of prayer, that not only natural and civil, but even religious and spiritual actions are overlaid with prayer. We pray, not only before we eat or drink our bodily nourishment, but also before we feed on the bread of the word and the bread in the sacrament. Prayer is requisite to make every providence and every ordinance blessed to us; prayer is needful to make our particular calling successful. Prayer is the guard to secure the fort-royal of the heart; prayer is the porter to keep the door of the lips; prayer is the strong hilt which defendeth the hands; prayer perfumes every relation; prayer helps us to profit by every condition; prayer is the chemist that turns all into gold; prayer is the master workman—if that be out of the way, the whole trade stands still, or goeth backward. What the key is to the watch, that prayer is to religion; it winds it up, and sets it going.—*Survinoek.*

Seeds of Sermons from the Minor Prophets.

If the Bible as a whole is inspired, it is of vast importance that all its Divine ideas should be brought to bear upon the living world of men. Though the pulpit is the organ Divinely intended for this work, it has been doing it hitherto in a miserably partial and restricted method. It selects isolated passages, and leaves whole chapters and books for the most part untouched. Its conduct to the Minor Prophets may be taken as a case in point. How seldom are they resorted to for texts! and yet they abound with splendid passages throbbing with Divine ideas. It is our purpose to go through this section of the Holy Word; selecting, however, only such verses in each chapter and book as seem the most suggestive of truths of the most vital interest and universal application.

Having passed rapidly through Hosea and Joel, two of the Minor Prophets, we come now to Amos. He, we are informed, was a native of Tekoa, a small region in the tribe of Judah, about twelve miles south-east of Jerusalem. Nothing is known of his parents. He evidently belonged to the humbler class of life, and pursued the occupation of the humble shepherd. From his flock he was divinely called to the high office of prophet; and though himself of the tribe of Judah, his mission was to Israel. He was sent to Bethel, into the kingdom of the ten tribes. He commenced his ministry in the reign of Uzziah, between 810 and 783 *a.c.*, and therefore laboured about the same time as Hosea. In his time idolatry, with its concomitant evils and immoralities of every description, reigned with uncontrolled sway amongst the Israelites, and against these evils he hurled his denunciations. The book has been divided into three parts: "First, sentences pronounced against the Syrians, the Philistines, the Phœnicians, the Edomites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Jews, and the Israelites, chapters i. and ii. Second, special discourses delivered against Israel, chapters iii. to vi. Third, visions, partly of a consolatory and partly of a comminatory nature, in which reference is had both to the times that were to pass over the ten tribes previous to the coming of the Messiah, and to what was to take place under His reign, chapters vii. to ix. His style is marked by perspicuity, elegance, energy, and fulness. His images are mostly original, and taken from the natural scenery with which he was familiar.

No. XC.

Subject: WOEFUL EASE.

"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came! Pass ye unto Calneh, and see; and from thence go ye to Hamath the great: then go down to Gath of the Philistines: be they better than these kingdoms? or their border greater than your border?"—*Amos vi. 1, 2.*

This chapter embraces the character and punishment of the whole Hebrew nation. The inhabitants of the two capitals are directly addressed in the language of denunciation and

charged to take warning from the fate of other nations (*ver. 1, 2*). Their carnal security, injustice, self-indulgence, sensuality, and total disregard of the Divine threatenings are next described (*ver. 3-6*). After which the prophet announces the captivity and the calamitous circumstances connected with the siege of Samaria, by which it was to be preceded (*ver. 7-11*). He then exposes the absurdity of their conduct, and threatens them with the irruption of an enemy that should pervade the whole country (*ver. 12-14*).—*Henderson*. The words of our text denounce a state of mind which most men desiderate—

"ease." Amidst the harassing cares, turmoils, and agitating events of life, men on all hands are crying out for ease. Like mariners that have long battled with tempests, they long for a calm sea in which to drop anchor and be at rest. But here there is a fearful "woe" denounced against ease. What is this ease?

I. It is the ease of PRIDE. These great nations, Judah and Israel, the one having its seat in Zion and the other in Samaria, because of their imaginary superiority as the chief of the nations, settled down in carnal security. Those that dwelt in Zion, or Jerusalem, felt themselves safe because of its historic grandeur, its temple, the dwelling-place of the Almighty, and its mountain fortifications. Those that dwelt in Samaria,—the ten tribes,—had the same false confidence in their safety. The mountains of Samaria, the seat both of the religion and government of a strong people, they relied upon, free from all apprehension of dangers. It was the ease of pride and overrated power.

II. It is the ease of RUIN. "Pass ye unto Calneh [this was an ancient city built by Nimrod] and see; and from thence go ye to Hamath [one of the chief cities of Syria] then go down to Gath of the Philistines [the great city in Philistia]." Remember these cities, "Be they better than these kingdoms?" Are you who live at Zion and Samaria greater people than they were, more strong and invincible? Yet they are gone, Calneh gone, Hamath gone, Gath gone. All are in ruins, long, long ago. Why then

should you feel yourselves safe and be at ease in Zion and Samaria? Their example condemns your false security and predicts your ruin. The ease here denounced is like the ease of stolid indifference or the ease of a torpid conscience, terribly general, fearfully criminal, and awfully dangerous. It must sooner or later be broken. The hurricanes of retribution must sooner or later lash the sleeping ocean into foaming fury. Souls are everywhere sleeping on the bosom of volcanoes. Oh for some voice from the heavens above or the earth beneath, to startle the men of this generation!

CONCLUSION: Learn from this subject—

First: *That the mere feeling of security is no infallible proof of safety.* Men are prone to deceive themselves. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Some men, like the drunkard whose vessel is going down, feel themselves safe because they are unconscious of the danger. Some men feel themselves safe because of the confidence they have in objects that are utterly unable to sustain them. The only feeling of security that proves safety, is that which springs from a conscious trust in God. Such can say, "God is our refuge and strength," etc., etc. Learn—

Secondly: *That great advantages may prove great curses.* It was a great advantage for Judah to have Zion, and Israel to have Samaria—great in many respects, national and religious. But these advantages, because they were overrated, trusted in, put in the place of God Himself,

proved to them most disastrous. So it ever is. Our civilization, our literature, our churches, our Bibles, have proved curses to millions, and will perhaps to millions more. The Pharisee in the Temple is an illustration of this. Learn—

Thirdly: That *retributions which have overtaken others should be a warning to us.* The prophet calls upon these men of Judah and Israel to remember Calneh, Hamath, Gath. "All these things," says Paul, "happened unto us for ensamples." Learn to read our fate in history. Ungodly nations, where are Egypt, Babylon, Greece, Rome? Ungodly Churches, where are the Churches of Asia Minor? etc., etc.

No. XCI.

Subject: MAN'S EVIL DAY.

"Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near."—Amos vi. 3.

This is another denunciation addressed to the great men in Zion and Samaria. They are said "to keep the day of calamity afar off and bring the seat of violence near."—*Delitzsch.* Three remarks are suggested by these words.

I. ALL MEN HAVE AN "EVIL DAY" IN THEIR FUTURE. Even the holiest men, men whose path through life has been most calm and prosperous, have before them certain calamities that befall all. There are trials common to all men, whatever their condition or character—afflictions, bereavements, infirmities; these await most men.

There is one evil day, however, for us all. Death is in many respects an "evil day." What mysterious sufferings it generally involves! What privileges and pleasures it terminates! What disruptions it produces! Sinner, thy death will be an evil day; and it is before thee, and it is nearer now than ever.

II. SOME MEN ADJOURN IN THOUGHT THIS "EVIL DAY." They "put far away the evil day." Ungodly men put this evil day so far on in the course of time that they seldom discern it and never realize it. It is a mere speck, seldom visible on the horizon of many years of unclouded sunshine. Why do men adjourn in thought this evil day? (1) Not because they have any doubt as to its advent. No day is more certain. Sooner shall all the wheels of nature be stopped than the sun of this day fail to break on every eye. "It is appointed for all men once to die." (2) Not because they lack reminders of its approach. Every physical pain, every tolling knell, every funeral procession, every graveyard—all remind us almost every moment that our evil day is coming. Why then adjourn the thought? The reason is found—

First: In the *strength of our material attachments.* Secondly: In our *dread of the mysterious.* Thirdly: In our *lack of interest in the spiritual and material.* Fourthly: In our *conscious unpreparation for the scenes of retribution.*

III. NONE who adjourn this "evil day" in thought CAN DELAY IT IN FACT. "And cause the seat of violence to come near." Perhaps what is meant

here is, that these men so ignored their coming calamities, that by their conduct they hastened them on. Ignoring it, they pursued such a course of injustice, falsehood, dishonesty, sinful indulgence, and impiety that served to bring it nearer. Thus the more they put it off in thought the nearer it came, because they became more self-destructive in their conduct. A general truth is suggested here, viz., *That a man who adjourns all thought of his end will pursue such a course of conduct as will hasten its approach.* Some men imagine that by thinking upon death they will hasten its advent, hence their dread of making wills. But such is not the fact. He who keeps the evil day in view, rightly regards it, prepares for it, will render such a practical obedience to the laws of health as to delay rather than hasten it. "Teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

No. XCII.

Subject: CARNAL INDULGENCE.

"That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; that chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David; that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive, and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed."—AMOS vi. 4-7.

Here is a sketch of the way in which these leading men of the chief nations luxuriated in carnal pleasures and sensual indulgences. Observe two things:—

I. THE MORAL TORPOR OF CARNAL INDULGENCE. Observe two things. First: These people wrought *entirely for the senses.* See how they *slept!* They provided themselves with "beds of ivory." They did not require rest for their weary limbs, otherwise beds of straw would have done. They wanted to be grand, they loved glitter, hence "beds of ivory." Here is the lust of the eye. See how they *ate!* "And stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall." They abounded in superfluities; they partook of the choicest dainties of nature, and that in a recumbent position. Here is the lust of the palate. See how they *sang!* "That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music like David." Musical sounds gratified their auricular sensibilities, and they chanted to the "viol." Here is the lust of the ear. See how they *drank!* They "drink wine in bowls." Small vessels would not do; they must take long, deep draughts of the pleasing beverage. Here again is the lust of the palate. See how they *anointed themselves!* "With the chief ointments." They regaled their olfactory nerves with the choicest perfumes of nature. Here is the lust of the smell. See how *indifferent* they were to the suffering of the true Church of God! "They are not grieved for the affliction

of Joseph." What a description this of a people that lived and wrought entirely for the senses. They were practical materialists. They had no spiritual vision, sensibilities, or experience. Their imperishable souls were submerged in the deep flowing sea of mere animal pleasures. Are there no such men now? For what do our prosperous tradesmen and the upper ten thousand live? For the most part, we fear, for the senses. Grand furniture—"beds of ivory," choicest viands,— "lambs out of the midst of the stall," magic music—"chants to the sound of the viol," delectable beverages—the choicest wines in "bowls," the most delicious aromas—"the chief ointments." Has carnal indulgence been more rife in any land or age than this? Matter everywhere governs spirit; the body everywhere is the despot, men are "carnally sold unto sin." Observe.

Secondly: These people wrought *without conscience*. In all this there is no effort of conscience recorded, no word uttered. There is indeed a reference to intellectual effort, for it is said "they invented to themselves instruments of music." Carnal indulgence has ever been and is now as much, if not more than ever, the great employer of man's inventive faculties. Luxury in England to-day is the great employer of human ingenuity. But there is no conscience here. When conscience is touched in such a state of things, and startled by the sense of its guilt, it exclaims, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me

from the body of this sin and death!"

II. The RETRIBUTIVE RESULT of carnal indulgence. The threat in the text is,—First: The loss of *liberty*. "Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive." Those who had taken the lead in revelry and all manner of wickedness were to be the first in the procession of captives. In such a position their disgrace would be more conspicuous. Luxury always leads to slavery: it is the eternal law of justice, that those who live to the flesh shall lose their freedom and be exiled into the region of tyranny. Lust when it is finished bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death. Secondly: The loss of *provisions*. "And the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed." They shall have scarcity, perhaps starvation, instead of the profusion of dainties with which their tables have been spread. All this carnal indulgence and voluptuousness, this luxury in ease, and diet, and music, and aroma will not go on for ever. They are abnormal conditions of human nature, retribution will one day put an end to them.

"O luxury,
Bane of elated life, of affluent
states,
What ruin is not thine?
. . . Behind thee gapes
Th' unfathomable gulf where Ashur
lies
O'erwhelmed, forgotten; and high
boasting Cham;
And Elam's haughty pomp; and
beauteous Greece;
And the great queen of earth, im-
perial Rome." *Dyer.*

Scientific Facts used as Symbols.

"Books of Illustration" designed to help preachers, are somewhat, we think, too abounding. They are often made up to a great extent of anecdotes from the sentimental side of life, and not always having a healthful influence or historic foundation. We find that preachers and hearers are getting tired of such. Albeit illustrations are needed by every speaker who would interest the people, and are sanctioned by the highest authority. Nature itself is a parable. Hence we have arranged with a naturalist who has been engaged in scientific investigation for many years, to supply the *Homilist* with such reliable and well-ascertained facts in nature, as cultured and conscientious men may use with confidence, as mirrors of morals and diagrams of doctrines.

Subject: The Oak, an Emblem of Solitary Men.

THE oak is never seen in a crowd, forming what may be properly termed a wood. An oak forest is nothing more than a poetical figure; for the oak stands alone, or mingled with other trees of different foliage, which it dominates with venerable feudal sovereignty.

Great men, as a rule, are not club men. The thinkers of the world have not been mere limbs of the social body. Great souls are insulated by their own instincts and by the awe in which society holds them. Small men, who form the bulk of the race, stand aloof in reverence, afraid to clasp or even to touch them. Shakspeare, Milton, Johnson, Robertson, stand amongst their compeers as oaks in the forest.

Subject: The Watching Horse: the Social Guardian.

IN the forests of Tartary and South America, where the wild horse is gregarious, there are herds of five or six hundred; which, being ill-prepared for fighting, or indeed for any sort of resistance, and knowing that their safety is in flight, when they sleep, appoint one in rotation who acts as sentinel while the rest are asleep. If a man approaches, the sentinel walks towards him, as if to reconnoitre and see whether he may be deterred from coming near, if the man continues, he neighs aloud and in a peculiar tone, which arouses the herd, and all gallop away, the sentinel bringing up the rear.

Society, knowing its dangers, has its guardians. The true guardian should be, like the sentinel horse, moved by the instincts of his own nature and not doing his work with form or officialism. While society is sleeping he should be on his watch, with eyes open to any threatening danger. And if an enemy approaches, instead of offering violence, sound the alarm and effect a rescue rather by a flight than by a fight. Would that all kings and bishops were like this horse!

Subject: *Luxuriance, a Hindrance to Progress.*

ON crossing the trackless portions of herb-covered Steppes in the low carriages of the Tartars, it is necessary to stand upright in order to ascertain even the direction to be pursued through the copse-like and closely crowded plants that bend under the wheels. Some of these steppes are covered with grass, others with succulent evergreen, articulated alkaline plants, while many are radiant with the effulgence of lichen-like tufts of salt scattered irregularly over the clayey soil like newly-fallen snow.

We have observed people who have been confused with the luxuriance which surrounded them. So sumptuous was the provision of every kind, that the taking of any step was only an exhibition of the difficulty of action. The embarrassment of riches is not a figure of speech, but a fact. The man who is surrounded by too much luxuriance is like a traveller amidst the profuse flowering vegetation which characterizes some of the Asiatic Steppes of the temperate zone. It is obvious that the traveller's progress would be much easier across the commons and fields of our own land, where nature has not been so prodigal in the luxuriance of her gifts. In like manner the movements in social life of persons who have neither poverty nor riches are noticeably more easy and less anxious than those of such individuals as are literally surrounded with luxury: who, on account of the very abundance of their possessions are puzzled as to the course they are to pursue for even their gratification from day to day.

Subject: Gold and Iron; Intrinsic and Extrinsic Value.

GOLD would by general consent be considered the most valuable metal. But then we must distinguish between substantial utility and adventitious value: and between intrinsic and extrinsic value, lest the word mislead us. For example, whatever may be the utility of gold and its market value, as a matter of fact, iron is by far the most substantially useful and intrinsically valuable metal. It is the very ladder on which the arts and trades have mounted to their present extraordinary height. It is the only metal which is not injurious to the health, the only metal which forms a never-failing constituent of the body, especially the blood. Now gold is found on the very surface of the earth, and it is only necessary to free it from earthy admixtures to obtain it in a pure metallic state. It seems presented to men by nature as a gift. But iron, like knowledge and everything in the world which possesses real intrinsic value, must be struggled for by the most laborious toil, by exertion both of the bodily and mental powers.

The hard pursuit of an intrinsically valuable thing is often a blessing, whilst the easy obtainment of adventitious value is too often unattended by much benefit to the receiver. The inhabitants of the countries who are arduously occupied in mining and working the iron, have the blessings attendant on labour, health, contentment, prosperity, and intellectual culture in a far greater degree than those of countries where gold abounds and industry is neglected. So the word value has, it is obvious, a very large meaning, and we often require to discern between very different things before we simply prefix it to another word, lest we convey an erroneous impression. In our loose use of words we call many things valuable which are altogether valueless, and which, if a crucial moral test, instead of a conventional one, were applied, would be pronounced injurious.

Homiletical Breviaries.

No. CLVII.

Subject: THE GREATEST REVOLUTION.

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."—2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.

The text demands a change in human life, of all changes the most urgent and glorious. Man from the cradle to the grave, if he lives only to an ordinary age, experiences many changes. Revolution is almost the law of human life. But here is the change without which all other changes are not only worthless but disastrous. The text contains two facts concerning the change. I. It involves an URGENT SEPARATION. "Come out from among them." "Them"—the carnal, idolatrous, corrupt men of the world. How? Not by personally withdrawing from all business intercourse with the men of the world, or from all communication with them. This, if possible, would neither be right, generous, nor useful. It means, "come out from them" in spirit, have no sympathy with their maxims, their pleasures, their current thoughts and pursuits. "Touch not" *any* "unclean thing" belonging to them. Let your intercourse with them be like that of angels, who, when sent from heaven, had no sooner discharged their errand than they flew back with rapid wing to the pure heavens again. "Come out." First: The Divine command implies *urgency*. So long as you mingle in sympathy with the ungodly you are degrading your nature, imperilling your interests, incurring the displeasure of your God. "Come out." Secondly: The Divine command implies *strenuous effort*. Heaven will not drag you out against your will; you must marshal your own energies and struggle away from the magic dominion of evil. He who would be free, himself must strike the blow. "Come out" from this moral Egypt; flee from this Sodom; forsake this Babylon! II. It involves a GLORIOUS IDENTIFICATION. "I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." First: Here is a Divine *reception*. Here is a compensation for all the sacrifices you may be required to

make. What matters it that you leave old fellowships, even father, mother, children? "I will receive you." Secondly: "Here is a Divine *affiliation*." "I will be a Father unto you." Leave the family of evil and corruption, and come into My family. I will love you, educate you, guard you, amply provide for you through all the future periods of your being.

No. CLVIII.

Subject: SOUL SORROWS CONTRASTED.

"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."—2 Cor. vii. 10.

The soul has many sorrows, sorrows arising from disappointments, slanders, fears of danger or loss, consciousness of sin, etc., etc. The text gives us two sorrows. I. Contrasted in their **NATURE**. The one is called "godly sorrow," the other, "the sorrow of the world." Wherein is the difference? First: Worldly sorrow is *selfish*; godly sorrow is *generous*. Worldly sorrow is not sorrow for sin on its own account, as an offence to infinite purity and goodness, but on account of its penal results, on account of the evil and sufferings it is likely to entail. In worldly sorrow a man regrets having done the wrong thing, simply on account of the evil consequences to himself likely to grow out of it. Not so in godly sorrow. It is the *sin itself* that is the grief; the anguish is in the wrongness. Secondly: Worldly sorrow is *natural*; godly sorrow is *evangelic*. By natural, I mean it is common. All men who have done wrong things feel regret on account of consequences. Mourning the results of conduct goes on more or less in every soul. But godly sorrow is generated only by a manifestation of God's love in Christ. II. Contrasted in their **RESULTS**. First: The one results in future *regret*, the other will not. Worldly sorrow is to be repented of, to be regretted. All the sorrows that an ungodly man has now, will be subjects of regret to him at some future day. His sorrows lead to some deeper, darker, more terrible distress. Secondly: The one worketh *salvation*, the other ruin. See the results of sorrow in death in Cain, Gen. iv. 12; in Saul, 1 Sam. xxxi. 3-6; in Ahithophel, 2 Sam. xvii. 23; in Judas, Matt. xxvii. 3-25. See godly sorrow in David, Ps. li; in the prodigal son, Luke xvi.; in Peter, Matt. xxvi. 75; in the converts on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 44-47.

No. CLIX.

Subject: THE TRUE PULPIT.

"We were bold in our God to speak unto you the Gospel."—1 THESS. ii. 2.

The text leads us to notice two things concerning the true pulpit or ministry. I. ITS SUBLIME COURAGE. "We were bold in our God." True pulpit courage must not be confounded with that audacity, impudence, self-assurance, which, alas! is so prevalent in these days. It is courage in God. This boldness in God springs from—First: *Love for God's character.* Love is the soul of courage. Strong love absorbs all selfish fears and makes the soul heroic. Paul loved his God so strongly that he lost all selfish feelings in the passion. Secondly: *Confidence in God's Gospel.* Paul knew that the Gospel he had received and that he preached was not of men, but of God. No infidel argument could shake his faith in this. It was to him a subject beyond question, beyond debate, settled amongst the immovable facts of his own consciousness. This is the courage the pulpit wants in this age—boldness in God. Some preachers speak as if they were "bold" in their theology, "bold" in their sect, "bold" in their body, "bold" in their own capacities; but Paul says, "bold in our God." He felt himself to be nothing. Another point which the text leads us to notice in connection with the true ministry is II. ITS TRANSCENDENT THEME. What was its theme? The Gospel, or glad tidings of God. What is the good news from God? The sum is this—First: That God loves all men, *although they are sinners.* Nature shows that God loves all men as creatures; but the Gospel alone reveals the fact that He loves them although sinners. "God so loved the world," etc. Secondly: That God's love for men as sinners is so great that *He gave His only begotten Son.* This is God's Gospel; and what a transcendent theme for the preacher! This Paul preached; not theology, not science, not philosophy, not metaphysical theories, but the Gospel of God.

The Chief Founders of the Chief Faiths.

Around no men, amongst all the millions of mankind, does so much interest gather as around the Founders of the Chief Religious Faiths of the world. Such men are sometimes almost lost in the obscurity of remote ages, or of the mystery with which they surrounded themselves or their early followers invested them. But whenever they can be discerned, their characters analysed, and their deeper experiences understood, they are found to be, not only leaders and masters of the multitudes who have adopted more or less of their creed and ritual, but also interpreters (more or less partial) of the universal yearnings of the soul of man. Such men may have seemed to sit at the fountains of human thought and feeling, and to have directed or have coloured the mysterious streams; but they have quite as often indicated in their doctrines and in their deeds the strong courses of the thoughts and feelings which are more permanent and deeper than any one man or even any one age could completely discover. The aim of these papers will be, with necessary brevity, to review the chief of such men, noting suggestively rather than exhaustively, their biography, their circumstances, their *theology*, and their *ethics*. And in concluding the series, it is proposed to compare and to contrast each and all of them with the "One Man whom in the long roll of ages we can love without disappointment and worship without idolatry, the Man Christ Jesus."

PALESTINE. BOOKS OF REFERENCE.—Max Müller's "History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature," "The Science of Language," "Chips from a German Workshop;" Rev. F. D. Maurice's "Religions of the World;" Archdeacon Hardwick's "Christ and other Masters;" Rev. J. W. Gardner's "Faiths of the World;" Miss Mary Carpenter's "Last Days of Rammohun Roy;" Rev. F. W. Farrar's "Witness of History to Christ;" Rev. A. W. Williamson's "Journey in North China;" Canon Liddon's Bampton Lecture on "Our Lord's Divinity;" Cousin's "History of Modern Philosophy;" S. Clarke's "Ten Great Religions;" Father Hue's "Christianity in China;" Carlyle's "Heroes and Hero-Worship."

SECOND SERIES.

No. I.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND BUDDHA.

HAVING glanced at the four Chief Founders of the Religions of the world, we now reach that point in our plan where we compare and contrast each with the Saviour, seeking at the same time to note the root-truth in each. For whatever that root-truth may have been, it was in each case that which vitalized the system, made its continuance possible, in spite often of flagrant errors, and rendered it an unconscious cry for, or prediction of, the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our work with regard to Gautama Buddha then leads us at once to compare him with the Saviour of the world. First, *he stood towards ancient Brahmanism somewhat as Jesus Christ*

stood towards Judaism. He entered into conflict with the priestism that, we have seen, had made Brahmanism only a religion for priests, and that had elevated them almost to deities. He proclaimed that religion, in other words the contemplation of Intelligence, and at last the absorption into it, was possible without the interference of any sacred class or caste. Here he resembles, though he is evidently transcended by, Him who was in perfect antagonism with the claims of Scribes and Pharisees, and who, at the well of Samaria, proclaimed the spiritual essence of true religion, in contradiction to all the rites and ceremonies as to times and places of Jewish tradition. In noticing this point of comparison, however, it must not be forgotten, that whereas Buddha entered on his work of reformation by despising and rejecting the Vedas, the Hindu sacred writers, Jesus Christ placed honour on the Hebrew Bible by such precepts as "Search the Scriptures." Moreover, whilst Gautama Buddha repudiated the doctrine of animal sacrifices which he found in vogue, Christ only abrogated their use because, as shadows and types, they were fulfilled in the sacrifice of Himself as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world."

As a second point of comparison, we may notice that Buddha in his doctrine of transmigration seems of necessity to imply the life after death of the soul—if not indeed its absolute immortality, certainly its power of surviving the death and decay of the body; for without a living soul to migrate, transmigration is impossible. Here he resembles but is transcended by Jesus Christ, who proclaims the resurrection and the life, and who declares to man about the great hereafter, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

As a third point of comparison, we may notice that Buddha taught a loftier morality than is to be found in other heathen systems. For in that he enjoined the sacredness of life, the duty of purity, temperance, truthfulness, almsgiving, and set high honour on the more feminine virtues of patience, forgiveness, and meekness, he resembled though he is transcended by Him from whose lips fell the Sermon on the Mount. Trans-

cended by Him, for He opens up motives for these virtues, and discovers springs of inspiration for them, of which the Hindu sage had no knowledge.

Then, a fourth point of comparison, is in the life lived by Buddha. For in his keen sympathy with the sadness of the men he saw around him, and his devotion of himself to a life of sacrifice for them, voluntarily foregoing his princely honours, spending years in comparative solitariness and poverty, and then giving himself up to untiring philanthropic work, he resembled, though is eclipsed by, Him who, being in the form of God, made Himself of no reputation, but took upon Him the form of a servant, who, though He was rich, for our sakes became poor, who, being holy, harmless, undefiled, went about doing good. Here, however, there are contrasts to be noticed; for whereas Buddha's biography is only dimly handed down to us by tradition from pre-historic eras, Jesus Christ's is written by many historians in an historic age and language. And whilst the sage of India lived eighty years to do his work, the peasant of Galilee reached but thirty-three. Moreover, whilst the one descended from the royal Hindu caste to live and mingle with the poor, the Saviour of the world became a man, for a while laying by Divine glory and restraining Divine might.

Another point of comparison between Buddha and our Lord is, both started aggressive systems of religious thought and life. Whilst Judaism, Brahmanism, and Zoroastrianism are opposed to all missionary enterprise; Buddhism, Mahomedanism, and Christianity were missionary religions from their beginning. There is surely harmony in the tones of the Buddhist chronicler, "Who would demur if the salvation of the whole world is at stake;" and those of Him who said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." However, here is a dissimilarity, that whilst Buddhism has only laid hold of Eastern mind, moving from India to Ceylon and China, but nowhere else. And although Buddhism has the first place in the religious census of mankind, Christianity has its converts on every zone, its churches on every shore.

Whilst many points of *contrast* between Buddha and our Blessed Lord might be mentioned, we now fix our minds only on one, and on a very important result of that one. It is in the idea of God. As we have seen, Buddha tells of a God who is, at first, nothing but Mind minding itself. Mere Intelligence, more closely scanned, is mere Law, and is at length seen to be a great Nothing. With this atheism, for it is practically that, there is also mixed idolatry. For if mere mind is God, then whoever is really mentally enlightened is really a god—a Buddha—and there are consequently scores of Buddha worshipped, of whom the apostle of Buddhism is the chief. There follows from this doctrine of God, that the highest state of being, if it can be called being, is also a Nothing—a Nirvana, as it is called. It is the exact opposite of all we know. It is to us therefore as nothing. This is the end of all Buddhist expectation; it is not absorption of self in the Divine, as in Brahmanism, it is rather an annihilation of self in this state of Nirvana. This is to be reached by in every way mortifying physical appetite and passion and lusts. So he avoids the thousand hells, and gains the heaven that is really an extinction of sentient existence. To attain that Nirvana is to be the great aim of every Buddhist; and so, though, as we have seen, the contemplation of such an exalted state moved Gautama to a pure and benevolent life, the lives of his followers as a mass have not been worthy of him. The system has been unable to form one good government; it has led its most obedient devotees to estrange themselves from all domestic, all social obligations. Its object has not been the good of men in their social condition. Whatever of good each man must cultivate in himself or do to others, is for the sake ultimately of reaching this Nirvana. So that clearly its morality in all ordinary men is a narrow selfishness. Each man's object is to save his own soul, to get himself into Nirvana. Now here are two points in which Christianity presents striking and glorious *contrasts*. First: *In the revelation of God*. The God of Christians is not a mere conception, or a vague abstraction, nor even a Law, nor merely a Benevolent

Maker. He is the universal Father; the all-protecting, forgiving Father. Secondly: *In the revelation of Heaven, and the method of salvation to it.* What millions of Buddhists vainly dream is to be attained in Nirvana, namely freedom from self, and are seeking to reach by superstitious rites and cruel practices, is actually and completely possible through Jesus Christ. We want this as much as the Hindu or Chinese; for no amount of activity, civilization, refinement, lifts from off us "that spectral shadow of self-consciousness" which we in our sadder hours find reflected on everything around us. "To be haunted by self is to be already familiar with some of the misery of hell." Intemperance, gambling, all such excitements, or, in the literal sense of the word, all such "amusements," are efforts to be free from it. For what are they but endeavours to get rid of musing? Such men are really uttering Paul's cry, though with other tones, "O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me?" This want Christ meets, this cry He answers. For through Him there is (1) *a separation from self.* From (a) self-consciousness. (β) a sense of guilt. Through Him there is (2) *a supremacy over self.* To faithful scholars in Christ's school Christ's *thoughts* reign over theirs; they beget, fashion, colour, bring into subjection human thinkings. He is, as the student of music or poetry, lost in the Great Master's inspiration. To loyal subjects in Christ's kingdom, Christ's *love* governs their affection. As the patriot in love of country, the mother in love of a sick child, the Christian forgets himself in love of Christ. Through Him there is (3) *a sublimation of self.* Our life is to be hid in His. He was born in Bethlehem, that we might be born again; He was crucified, that we might die to sin; He rose, that our whole inner life might be transfigured with hope and strength. And ultimately we shall be like Him. At that day self-consciousness will be lost, self-will be glorified. For we shall know that we are in God, and that God is in us.

Redland.

URIJAH R. THOMAS.

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

ORIGINAL SIMILITUDES.

JUSTICE.—Justice, indeed, is but love guarding the universe from all that will disturb its happiness and break its peace. It is love, weeding God's garden of all that mars its beauty, taints its fragrance, or checks its growth.

SIN.—Every sin is not only an act but a seed; it has in it a self-propagating instinct. No sooner does a man sin than he gets the spirit of the tempter, and with every sin the seductive animus gets strength.

THE INSTABILITY OF EVIL.—Evil will not stand for ever; it is not a moral rock in God's universe, it is a mere creature edifice on the shifting sand. Wicked men are more numerous to-day than ever in England, as well as in other and more benighted lands; the more numerous they are, the more transgression there is in the world. The more numerous the coral insects, the faster grows the island; and the more numerous crimes become, the higher rises the hellish mountain of transgression. But to whatever proportion evil may grow in the world, however broad its base and towering its summit, it shall fall: its mountains must depart and its hills be removed. It will fall because it is opposed to the constitution of things. There is nothing in God's universe in which evil can take a lasting roothold. Its roots are only like those of certain marine plants, that spring up from one floating wavelet to be destroyed by the

next; or rather like the roots of those atmospheric plants of which I have somewhere read, that strike only into a wave of air, that rolls swiftly on, heaven knows where. It is not a river rolling from ocean to ocean, fed evermore by the boundless, but a mere stagnant pool which has appeared incidentally, to be exhaled by the sun. Evil has a thousand forms. It appears not only in the thoughts, words, and deeds of individual life, but in a thousand systems of thought, in innumerable institutions and methods of action. But what are these? They have no solid foothold in God's creation; they are only bubbles that appear in the stream of destiny, just here where it is a little agitated; they must break as it swells in volume and approaches the great sea. It must fall because it has in it the seeds of destruction. Error and wrong in all their forms carry with them seeds of dissolution; their bulk is but an unnatural growth, their beauty but the hectic flush of consumption. Night can only last till the day comes; sin is night, and eternal day is to break on our planet.

THE HUMANITY OF THE BIBLE.

—How full is the Bible of human life—its follies and its wisdoms, its vices and its virtues, its friendships and bereavements, its perplexities and adversities, its sorrows and its joys. God has filled it with humanity, in order that it might interest men and im-

prove them. The crimes of ancient men are here used as beacons, flashing their red light from the dangerous rocks and quicksands, and their virtues as bright stars to guide us safely on our voyage.

RECTITUDE is the heart of true moral courage; where this is not, there may be brutal daring, but no true heroism.

SOCIAL REQUITALS.—As the rocks reverberate thunder, hearts echo hearts; they give back what they receive.

IGNORANCE.—At best we can learn but the alphabet of truth here: the great volumes fill the universe.

HOPE—what a wonderful power! It is an engine that keeps the world in action; it is the anchor that holds our natures still and secure amid the heaving surges of our mortal life.

POPULARITY.—Popularity is indeed to character what the "fining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold." Few things in life show us the stuff of which men are made more than this. Corks float to the surface, and dance upon the popular wave, where marble rests quietly in the sands out of sight. "Small men," says Garibaldi, "always rush to the surface."

MISTAKEN FRIENDSHIP.—This is often offence and an injury to men in trouble. It comes with a glib tongue but with an icy heart: its words are often irrelevant, they never touch the point and throw no light upon our darkness; not unfrequently does it enter our chamber of

affliction intrusively and unasked, and begin to criticize words that we have spoken in the wild fury of a nature wrapped in anguish. Mistaken friendship is sometimes as pernicious and irritating as false friendship.

ENGLISH TOWNS.—There is a great charm about an English town on a calm bright Sunday morning, especially in the summer season. Instead of the rattling of machines, the strokes of workmen, and the din of commerce, the bells of different churches peal their music into every street, alley, and house. We like those old bells, there is poetry in them; or, at any rate, they fill us with the poetry of the days that are gone. The people you saw yesterday, hurrying with business step, speeding their way through the streets, each man for himself, you see to-day all clean and well attired, in social groups walking with stately steps to the house of prayer. Ideas about God, responsibility, death, future life, which more or less slumbered through the week, are called up to-day, and they give an air of reverence and solemnity to everything around.

EARNESTNESS.—Earnestness is neither action nor voice; the deepest earnestness sometimes whispers, it trembles on the tongue, nay, is oftentimes speechless. It is when the tide of feeling rises high and chokes the voice, that the speaker's eloquence becomes most mighty.

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

CHARACTERISTICS FROM THE WRITINGS OF JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, BEING SELECTIONS PERSONAL, HISTORICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL, AND RELIGIOUS FROM HIS VARIOUS WORKS. Arranged by W. S. LILLEY. Messrs. King & Co., 65, Cornhill.

The Editor of this work informs us that his object in arranging these selections from the works of Dr. Newman, has been to give more accurate knowledge of the writer, concerning whom an amount of ignorance and misunderstanding prevails. This is important. A man of such transcendent abilities, rich culture, varied and extensive information, profound moral and spiritual experiences, and withal marvellous influence, is worth revealing to the world in a true light. The selections are taken from the four great divisions of his literary productions; personal, philosophical, historical, and religious. The Editor has planned this work on the same principles as those which Lord Bacon lays down for the compilation of a book on institutions of law. "Principally," he says, "it ought to have two properties, the one a perspicuous or clear order or method, and the other an universal latitude or comprehension. That the student may have a little pre-notion of everything." We scarcely know of a work, certainly no modern work, that is more interesting or deeply instructing than this. Every page glows with genius, teems with lofty thoughts, and breathes a profound loyalty to conscience and reverence for the greatest truths touching duty and destiny. Besides his matchless thinkings and experiences, his style, for clearness, vigour, and splendour, has never been excelled. To have a great mind in your possession, is of more value than to have the wealth of Croesus; and this book gives us one of the rarest and richest minds of the age.

THE WORKS OF AURELIUS AUGUSTINE. Edited by MARCUS DODS, D.D. Vol. XI. TRACTATES ON GOSPEL OF JOHN, vol. 2. Vol. XII. THE ANTI-PELAGIAN WORKS OF ST. AUGUSTINE, vol. 2. COMMENTARY ON PROVERBS OF SOLOMON. By FRANZ DELITZSCH, D.D. Translated by M. G. EASTON, D.D. Vol. I.

Literary Notices.

THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. By DR. GUST. OEHLEB. Vol. I.
Translated by ELLER SMITH.

THE YEAR OF SALVATION. By J. VAN OOSTERZEE, D.D. Translated by
C. SPENCE.

AIDS TO THE STUDY OF GERMAN THEOLOGY. Edinburgh, T. & T. CLARK.

The publishing house of Messrs. Clark is an old and most fruitful tree. We have received at different times, now for many years, rich clusters of literary fruit from this renowned fruit-tree. The last,—that now on our table,—is not inferior to any of its predecessors.

Here we have a volume from Augustine containing **LECTURES ON THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN**. The character of Augustine's thinkings, the qualities of his spirituality, and the style of his utterances, are doubtless well-known to our readers. They have been valued by Biblical scholars and devout saints of many ages. In this work on St. John he appears in some of his most interesting aspects. The other volume, on **THE PELAGIAN THEOLOGY**, will also repay perusal. Although the age of mere theological discussions is evidently passing away, the history of the doctrinal battles of the ablest combatants of past times will always be interesting to the Biblical student.

Here is a volume on the **PROVERBS OF SOLOMON**, by Dr. DELITZSCH. This is the first of three which will contain the writings of Solomon: they form the last section of the Keil and Delitzsch commentaries of the Old Testament. Whatever may be the judgments of men as to some of the theological conclusions of these eminent expositors, there will be no difference of opinion as to the accuracy, wealth, and expanse of their scholarship, and the honesty and reverence with which they prosecute their search into the meaning of God's Holy Word. Our regret is, that this work on the Proverbs did not reach us when we commenced (under the title of the "Practical Philosopher") our work on the same subject. In many cases it would have helped us to reach the meaning of obscure expressions, and suggested some new if not more important trains of thought.

THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, by Dr. OEHLEB, is a kind of Handbook of Old Testament Theology, though it must be confessed incomplete and somewhat defective, by reason of the death of the Author. This volume, besides an elaborate introduction, contains two great sections: the first dealing with the history of revelation to the entrance of the Jews into Canaan, and the second the doctrine and services of Mossaism. Under each of these sections is a vast variety of most interesting and important subjects.

THE YEAR OF SALVATION, by Dr. OOSTERZEE, contains a large number of short, devout, and practical discourses on certain important passages of Scripture. These discourses are intended to be read during the festival portion of the year, which extends from the 1st of December to the 21st of the following July. Dr. Oosterzee is never dull, but always fresh; never cold, but generally aflame. Every page shows that his heart is in his work.

AIDS TO THE STUDY OF GERMAN THEOLOGY, consists of sixteen chapters, the subjects of which are, "The Natural Theology of Kant; Kant's Interpretation of the Facts of Scripture; Transition to Schleiermacher; Thought Translation of the System of Schleiermacher; Diversities in the School of Schleiermacher; Fichte; Introduction to the Theology of Hegel and Schelling; Trinity of Schelling and Hegel; Evolution of the Hegellian Trinity in time; Evolution of the Hegellian Trinity in the History of the Church; The Right and the Left; Mythical Theory of Strauss; Breaking up of the Mythical Theory; Signs of a Return to the Old Rationalism; The Old Faith and the New; Parallel between the History of English and German Theology." Biblical students will, we have no doubt, hasten to possess themselves of this little work, fraught with sound valuable information.

PROTESTANTISM: ITS ULTIMATE PRINCIPLE. By R. W. DALE, M.A.
London: Hodder & Stoughton.

This is the substance of a Lecture delivered in Exeter Hall. In it Mr. Dale discusses the right of private judgment, the authority of Holy Scripture, and justification by faith. Subjects of great practical moment are these. We need scarcely say that they are treated with the author's acknowledged thoughtfulness and ability.

STRIVING FOR THE FAITH: A SERIES OF LECTURES DELIVERED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE SOCIETY. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

We scarcely know what is meant by the Christian Evidence Society. We know that there is a Christian Evidence Society needed; not a society for logical controversy, which irritates and seldom convinces, but a society whose Christly life commends Christianity irresistibly to the mind and consciences of men. One Christly life has more power to convince men of the Divinity of Christianity than all the arguments of the Paleys and the Butlers. This work consists of eight Lectures, all by different authors. (1) Difficulties on the Side of Unbelief in Accounting for Historical Christianity, by Dr. McLean. (2) Variations of the Gospels in their relation to the Evidences and Truths of Christianity, by Rev. T. Birks, M.A. (3) The Apocryphal Gospels, by Harris Cowper. (4) Evidential Value of the Early Epistles of St. Paul, viewed as Historical Documents, by Dr. Lorimer. (5) Lord Lytton on the Conversion of St. Paul, by Rev. John Gritton. (6) Alleged Difficulties in the Moral Teaching of the New Testament, by Rev. C. Bow, M.A. (7) The Combination of Unity with Progressiveness of Thought in the Books of the Bible, by Rev. G. Titcomb, M.A. (8) The Autobiography of John Stuart Mill, by W. Browne, M.A.

All the Lectures are by able men, and each prosecutes his task with earnestness and ability. It is one of the best books of the class to which it belongs that we have seen.



A HOMILY

ON

The Atonement.

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”—1 JOHN iv. 10.

THE atonement is the central, most characteristic truth of Christianity, the very heart of the Gospel. Roman Catholic ritual professes to give it the highest honour: does it always receive equal honour from our modern Protestant teaching? Christ Himself insisted upon the necessity of “eating His flesh and drinking His blood”; and the greatest of His apostles felt that he could not preach Christ except as the Crucified One. Our religion is not Deism, with Christ merely as the greatest teacher of its purest and noblest conceptions. Our law of life is not a system of natural ethics, beautifully tinged with allusions to the character and commandments of our Lord. And yet, though the great truth of vicarious sacrifice, of atoning propitiation, is generally admitted to be the spinal cord, without which the whole framework of Christianity,—as a system of facts and truths, of doctrines and laws, of warnings and hopes,—must fall into the generalities of a Deist’s worship and morality is

not this vital truth of Christianity too often put into the background, slurred over, only occasionally alluded to, as a matter about which every man is supposed to hold some opinion, only that it does not very much matter what opinion he holds? By some it is regarded as an old-fashioned dogma, which modern culture has altogether outgrown. But if it can be shown to embody a living fact, which is as certainly "from everlasting" as Deity itself, it will undoubtedly endure "to everlasting," as the immovable anchor of human hope. And wherever, in modern teaching, this doctrine of the atonement has been renounced or thrust into comparative obscurity, what has taken its place as a motive-power for the regeneration of mankind? In days not long gone by these two weapons—"the Cross" and "the terrors of the Lord"—were wielded more simply and more avowedly than they are now in many quarters. The "terrors of the Lord" are often so toned down as to be little better than a feeble caution, gentle counsels, in which there is a diseased fear of hurting men's feelings or of driving them one step from ruin. The Cross, too, is often treated as a kind of sentimental symbol—a memorial around which superstitious conceptions have gathered, and which must be skilfully philosophized about, and only so far introduced as to obtain from it a flavour of orthodoxy. So-called Christian discourse appears frequently to hover round the Cross, now and then points to it, claims attention to it only in vague and unpractical terms; no definite views regarding it are arrived at; no practical use of it is earnestly maintained; no teaching concerning it is put forth so plainly, so frequently, so fervently as to show that the Atonement of the Cross is held to be the spiritual marrow of "the truth and grace" which "came by Jesus Christ."

Are not misty views on this matter, in which there is

scarcely any intelligent reality, to be earnestly deprecated? If I *trust* in Christ and am devoted to Him, it ought to be, as far as possible, for well-defined reasons, and with settled ideas of what He is to me and has done for me. He saves; but *how*? Can I be satisfied with a mysterious process, the nature of which is utterly hidden from my intelligent apprehension? A crucified Saviour reveals to me the compassionate and forgiving mercy of God. But *how* can that mercy act righteously and release the guilty from the curse of the law? Christ, so loving me as to die for me, wins my heart, and fills it with peace and joy; but the question must arise, What was the meaning and extent of that dying on my behalf? The love of Christ cannot fully exert its constraining power unless the mind grasps clear and solid truth as to *why* that love suffered, and *what* it has effected.

A refuge from intellectual difficulties ought not to be sought in dreamy sentimentalities, or in a superstitious use of established phrases and a mechanical cultivation of frames and feelings. It is a Christian duty to seek positive views which shall be valued as truths. After the best research there must necessarily be much of perplexing mystery in this central truth of the Gospel. But our inability to reach the summit, where the clearness is unsullied by mist or cloud, is no reason why we should be content with the murky valley of unintelligent credulity. As "children of the light" our strivings should be towards intellectual brightness, no less than spiritual fervour. "Clouds and darkness" may be around the Saviour's cross as well as round the Judge's throne, but the Sun of Righteousness sheds His own radiance upon those who, in humble but resolute thoughtfulness, seek to dwell in His light.

If *one* view of the Sacrifice of the Cross is here advocated, it is not because that view is regarded as an

exhaustive one. The thimbleful of no one human conception can be commensurate with the ocean of divine truth and love, whose waves roll so purely and so gloriously round that Cross. Christ was the Word of God; God uttered Himself in Christ, and in summary by the Cross. Even the whole Bible itself, therefore, cannot in adequate fulness expound the Cross to us. *Many* views of the Atonement may be like ore, in which there are grains of the precious metal of eternal truth; and which needs only to be well hammered and tested by hard controversy, and washed in the purifying stream of Time, so that those valuable grains may be obtained. Even the fire of the *odium theologicum* has destroyed, not merely good feelings, but a great deal of folly, leaving useful material to be built up into the sounder structures of an intelligent faith. Now, Bible teaching about the Atonement has in it undoubtedly much that is figurative. It could not be otherwise. No assertion can be made about an infinite God, His "thoughts" and "ways," which is an absolutely pure and perfect statement of truth. It must contain, more or less, an admixture of the finite, the earthly, the human, of that which is only a shadowy suggestion of the inconceivable reality. Christ is spoken of as "the Son of God," "the Lamb of God," a "Mediator," a "High-Priest." In these and many similar expressions there is obviously figure, partially revealing yet largely concealing the essential, impenetrable facts. So into the statements about His sufferings "unto death," the figurative enters in various degrees; illustrations being borrowed from Old Testament types, from the common relationships of life, and from proceedings in courts of law. And—let it be carefully remarked—differences of creed with regard to the Atonement have been largely due to the different degrees in which figurativeness has been attributed to Scripture assertions. Some

interpreters having regarded as broad figures what others have adhered to as literally accurate statements of truth. "The blood of Christ" has been held by some to mean the pouring out of the visible blood; by others, to denote generally all the mediatorial sufferings; by others, to be a corporeal indication of the redeeming love, in which, and not in the sufferings, salvation is to be found. In the case of a simple New Testament phrase, the advocates of one view may charge the adherents of another with a gross carnality of literalism, while the other may retort that Scripture terms may be so spiritualized as to lose nearly all their distinctive worth in the refinements of philosophical ideas.

There is surely a wide-spread need of such views of the Atonement as shall commend themselves readily, and with a force difficult to evade or resist, to the ordinary judgment and conscience. Salvation must be a great *moral* change, not a miraculously mechanical process, to be effected through certain items of faith, blindly received and stored away in the dark chambers of a superstitious reliance. When a man is told that God loves the right and hates the wrong, his conscience, unless fearfully diseased and distorted, must at once and abidingly assent. Ultimately, and throughout the world must not men be won, enlightened, purified, saved, through such views of the atonement as will well-nigh force themselves upon the common judgment and the average conscience of mankind?—not views which have to be elaborated by the learned, upheld by an array of textual evidence, and accepted rather as a charm against Divine displeasure and eternal ruin than an indisputable and priceless truth about the very nature of God, which a grateful heart can embrace, unchecked by any protest from a thoughtful understanding and an enlightened conscience.

A few general principles may serve as a pathway towards such views. Guilty man must look for salvation to God alone. "Hope thou in God," is the bidding alike of reason and of the Gospel. Christ was "God manifest in the flesh." Whatever of Deity can be uttered and reflected in a nature which was human as well as Divine, was uttered in the "Word of God" and reflected in the "express image of the Father." Though, in one sense, "no man hath seen, or can see, God"; yet, in another sense, Christ could truly declare, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." And—to advance a step—there could be in this one supreme manifestation of Deity, *nothing* as to moral nature and character, as to thought, feeling, will, to which there is not an element corresponding with most perfect harmony in the Father Himself. "I and my Father," said Christ, "are one." Further, there was unity in Christ's nature. He was man and God, not in the sense that He had a human nature, and, as a higher stratum, a Divine nature; nor that the human was like a cup into which the divine was poured; nor that the human was as the warp athwart which the divine was woven; but there was *one* nature which was at one and the same moment human and Divine. And the emotions of that nature must have affected the whole of it. The sufferings did not appertain only to the body, nor exclusively to a human soul, while a Divine element floated, as it were, aloft, serenely unaffected.

Need it be a startling and repulsive idea, that a Divine nature was affected by suffering? To our finite minds suffering and blessedness may seem incompatible; but so also do Trinity and Unity, sonship and equality, divine sovereignty and human freedom. Now the evil that is in the world cannot *in itself* be directly willed by a holy and benevolent God. There must be in the infinite sensitive-
 as of the Divine nature a moral state fitly corresponding

to that evil,—a state, therefore, which could not be desired for its own sake. We search for an appropriate word to designate that state, and can scarcely find one more appropriate than *suffering*. The idea of a God stoically raised in apathy above the sins and sin-caused sorrows of the world, would present a stony hardness from which it would be vain to hope for succour and salvation. We need a God of com-passion, of sym-pathy,—One “afflicted in our afflictions;” and Christ has revealed, not in His words only, but pre-eminently in Himself, a love which, in the deepest and broadest sense, sym-pathizes, or, if we may invent a term, pro-pathizes, suffers on behalf, and in the stead of, the guilty and needy,—a love which comes down to the low level of our sins and sorrows, enters into them without defilement, takes them upon itself in compassionate grief, and by voluntarily, self-sacrificingly bearing the burden of guilt, so bears it away, that it can proffer pardon to the guiltiest. *This* divine love has come nigh to us in Christ, has dwelt, spoken, wrought among us, and at last lavished its richest treasures upon us at the Cross. We may, accordingly, view the agonies of Gethsemane and Calvary, not solely as a brief experience into which the Son of God passed, and emerged from when a specific purpose had been accomplished,—an experience to which we are to conceive of nothing corresponding in the eternal nature of God. The Cross is a tone of the Divine voice, which utters the everlasting feelings of God’s heart towards the sins and the perishing souls of men. We are not to think, on the one hand, of essential Deity as the “I am that I am,” the same from everlasting to everlasting; and, on the other hand, of one section, so to speak, of the Divine Being as separating Himself, and for a brief period assuming an experience in which absolute Deity has no share. Between the Father and the Son the union must have been marked by

unbroken and unvarying continuity; not simply including the brighter experiences of the Son to the exclusion of the darker. There is no warrant for a line of separation at any point. In not sparing His Son, the heart of the Father was smitten, no less than the heart of the Son. Christ becomes to us fully God, when God is to us *all* that Christ was. The union between the Father and Son stands forth as perfect, only as it includes in its grand compass *every* moral incident in the Son's mediatorial career.

Hence, while we heartily hold to all that is special, particular, definite matter-of-fact with regard to the vicarious and propitiatory death of Jesus, we need not stop at that which, as an historical event, is limited, as to time and space, to a particular spot of earth and a small section of time. The "Lamb slain," "appeared," revealed Himself, *once*; but He was, "slain from before the foundation of the world," and is still, before the heavenly throne, the "Lamb, as it had been slain." The Son's experience should surely be regarded, therefore, as an unbroken unity from everlasting to everlasting, and His earthly career as but a temporary disclosure of His eternal feelings. He is now not to be known "after the flesh." For He, and all that pertains to Him, sufferings and all, have passed into that "glory, which He had with the Father before the world was." The baptism of agony, the crown of thorns, every visible element of suffering,—all those earthly things have been, not lost, but transfigured and glorified into outward signs of that everlasting love which, without losing aught of its own perfect blessedness, could take into its own bosom all the sorrows and the sins of a world, and by atoning grief work out a redemption from the curse, a salvation unto eternal life. In that love, *all* its experiences and movements, the Father is one with the Son.

Thus, when Christ is thought of as "God manifest," and Christ "crucified" as still "God manifest," the particular is expanded and glorified in the general, the temporal in the eternal, special facts in everlasting principles; and we anticipate in hopeful faith the climax of the mediatorial dispensation, when "God shall be all in all."

What then as to propitiation, "and the influence which is to propitiate, or render propitious? The reason for God's sovereign feelings and actions must lie in *Himself*. He is not made propitious by anything external; certainly not, if we find the reason of His propitiousness in Christ, and hold that "the Word was God." Christ's deeds and sufferings contained nothing foreign to the absolute Deity of the Father, to render *His* feelings favourable towards man. Still towards evil in itself there must be in the Divine nature the hostility of holiness, the hatred of justice, the avenging sentence of a righteous law. How then is this wrath propitiated? Is it not thus,—that wrath and forgiving mercy are only different aspects of one and the same Love,—aspects which we have to contemplate separately, but which really must exist together in harmony? Love is filled with holy anger against sin, rendering infinite homage to the claims of righteousness and justice and law. But love can find *in itself* a sufficient reason for exercising mercy,—a reason against which Justice can raise no objection, and in which the law is perfectly honoured,—that reason Love has in *its own vicarious grief*. Love, as Justice, Righteousness, Holiness, is satisfied, because that same Love, as Compassion and Mercy, takes upon itself and, not by mere sympathy, but by pro-pathy, atones for human guilt.

We may draw some elucidation of this point from the familiar difference between the administration of a judge and that of a father. A judge has to enforce law, and to

impose its righteous penalties. He may personally have forgiving feelings; but in his official capacity he must not indulge these, or he will violate the claims of righteousness. In the family there ought to be as much reverence for righteousness as in social life; and yet the father can freely forgive a repentant child without any infraction of the demands of righteousness. Is it not because the father's own feelings are allowed to come into play, and *his* sympathy and grief over the wrong committed are at least part of the homage rendered to those demands? The judge is the representative of justice alone: the father represents both justice and mercy; and these two are blended in his paternal love, which, just because it can take account of its own sufferings, has the liberty and right to pardon the penitent offender. So, in an infinitely higher sphere, the love of God has this sovereign right to pardon,—not without just reason, not out of mere caprice and indulgence, but because it is an infinitely vicarious love, and in its grief over man, revealed in Christ as a crucified Saviour, has perfectly done honour to the requirements of a righteous law, and has opened a “highway of holiness” for the return of “ransomed” sinners to the Divine favour.

Does not the view we have presented of the Atonement facilitate a reply to a question which may perplex many minds, especially among the young and thoughtful,—“How can sufferings, endured centuries ago in a distant land, affect my salvation?” Welcome help towards a solution proffering itself in the reflection,—“What Jesus felt and said and did, is what God feels and says and does; gazing upon that loving, grieving, pardoning Saviour, we see through, or rather in, Him, the very image of that Heavenly Father who loves each one, grieves over his sin, yet waits to accept him as a penitent and forgiven child.” And is not this for our daily practical life a living gospel,

a present "power of God unto salvation;" a gospel which tells, not only of what transpired long ages since, but what is now and every moment true; a Divine energy, always ready, in answer to the prayer of faith, to stream down from the one unchanging Love upon our thirsty, weary, anxious hearts? Mourning over and hating each sin, because it "crucifies the Son of God afresh," "grieves the Holy Spirit of God," and the yearning heart of "our Father in heaven," we can lay all sin upon that Love which has provided its own Atonement, and can, therefore, in sovereign mercy, say, "thy sins are forgiven; depart in peace."

W. F. HUENDALL, M.A.

Subject: THE CHARACTER OF GOD.

"O righteous Father," etc.—JOHN xvii. 25, 26.

I. CHRIST'S DECLARATION of the Father's character. Righteous as a father. (1) Men have many names revealing different relations to their fellow-men, as judge, master, father, etc. But if known to be righteous in one relation, it is most probable that they will be in all. So God, as Father, Judge, etc. (2) This declaration is based on personal knowledge. Testimony as to character is of value in proportion to the intimacy of the persons, to the length of time that intimacy has lasted, and to the character of the person bearing testimony. Apply this to Christ, and consider also that He was willing to suffer to reveal the Father. II. The ~~and~~ for which Christ declared the character of God—ver. 26. To beget love in His disciples to the Father. Knowledge of character is indispensable to love; and to increase in the knowledge of any good being is to increase in love towards him. Nothing reveals character more than self-sacrifice. Witness Abraham. So the highest knowledge we have of God is through the gift of His Son.

WILLIAM HARRIS.

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Psalms.

Our Purpose.—Many learned and devout men have gone philologically through this *TANNAKIM*, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal *hermeneutics* of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough *homiletic* treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

Our Method.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1.) The *HISTORY* of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2.) *ANNOTATIONS* of the passage. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase, or allusion that may occur.—(3.) The *ARGUMENT* of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is amongst the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4.) The *HOMILETICS* of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavour so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately deduced, as to suggest such thoughts, and indicate such sermonizing methods, as may promote the proficiency of modern pulpit ministrations.

Subject: Aspects of National Piety.

“We have heard with our ears, O God,” etc.—*PSALM* xliv. 1-26.

HISTORY.—“*To (for) the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, Maschil.*”

This *Maschil*, or didactic psalm, is ascribed, like *Psalm* xlii., to the sons of Korah. The author of this psalm cannot be ascertained with certainty, although it is generally regarded as the production of David's pen. Nor can the occasion of its composition be discovered. It evidently points to a period of great national trial and interest; but what was the particular event? Whether it refers to the condition of the Jewish people under the leadership of the Maccabees, as some suppose, or to the mournful time of the return from the Babylonish captivity, or to the beginning of David's reign (see 1 Sam. xxxi.), or to the period in Hezekiah's reign referred to in 2 Kings xix. 4, cannot be decided. One thing is clear from the first sixteen verses, that it was composed at a period when the Jews had long been in possession of their land, and that their condition now was that of defeat, oppression, and division.

ANNOTATIONS: Ver. 1.—“*We have heard with our ears, O God,*” etc. The wonderful interpositions of God on behalf of their race had come down to them by tradition. Parents had told the story to their children, generation had transmitted it to generation. Were men always accurate in memory and truthful in principle, we might well prefer

tradition to writing as a means of knowing the past. "*What work Thou didst.*" The original is more forceful, "*The work Thou didst work.*"

Ver. 2.—"*How Thou didst drive out the heathen with Thy hand, and plantedst them ; how Thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out.*" By Joshua He exterminated the Canaanites and swept the country clear from them. He uprooted the aborigines and planted them instead.

Ver. 3.—"*For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them.*" Joshua and his army were merely His instruments. "*The light of Thy countenance.*" Thy favour.

Ver. 4, 5.—"*Thou art my King, O God : command deliverances for Jacob. Through Thee will we push down our enemies : through Thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us.*" "Thou art my king, Elohim : command the full salvation of Jacob ! By Thee do we put down our oppressors. In Thy name do we tread down those who rise up against us."—*Delitzsch*. Nothing is required for our "deliverances" but Thy command, Thy word. Give us that and we will push down our enemies,"—we will crush them.

Ver. 6.—"*For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.*" "I"—who? The godly author of the hymn—David or some other true patriot saint. Trust in God is the soul of true, courage and the muscle of triumphant force.

Ver. 7.—"*But Thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us.*" Thou givest us the victory over our enemies, and hast put to shame those who hate us."

Ver. 8.—"*In God we boast all the day long, and praise Thy name for ever.*" In Elohim do we make our constant boast, and His goodness we gratefully acknowledge for ever.

Ver. 9.—"*But Thou hast cast off, and put us to shame ; and goest not forth with our armies.*" Here begins a sad contrast between the past and the present.

Ver. 10.—"*Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy : and they which hate us spoil for themselves.*" "Two of the most unwelcome incidents of warfare are here specified—flight and spoliation. Spoiled for themselves, not merely for their own advantage, but at their own will and discretion."—*Alexander*. (Compare 1 Sam. xiv. 48 ; xxiii. 1.)

Ver. 11, 12.—"*Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat ; and hast scattered us among the heathen. Thou sellest Thy people for nought, and dost not increase Thy wealth by their price.*" "The sense is : Thou hast given us Thy people into the power of their enemies without trouble, without causing the victory even to be dearly bought, as one who parts with a good part for any price which he despises and hates, desiring merely to get rid of it : so that there is an abbreviated comparison. The parallel is Jer. xv. 18, 'Thy substance

and Thy treasures will I give to the spoil without price.'—*Hengstenberg*.

Ver. 13.—“*Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.*” Thou wilt make us a reproach. The idea is, If this state of things continues, we shall be scoffed at by all around.

Ver. 14.—“*Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.*” A “byword”—a proverb; “shaking of the head” is expressive of contempt.

Ver. 15, 16.—“*My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me. For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth; by reason of the enemy and avenger.*” “Continually is my confusion before me, and the shame of my face covereth me, because of the voice of him who reproacheth and blasphemeth, because of the right of the enemy and the revengeful.”—*Delitzsch*.

Ver. 17, 18.—“*All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten Thee, neither have we dealt falsely in Thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from Thy way.*” “Neither have we been false to Thy covenant.”—*Alexander*. Notwithstanding the shortcomings and transgressions of Israel, they still professed regard for the Divine law.

Ver. 19.—“*Though Thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.*” The word “dragons” here some render jackals; but whatever animals it means is of little exegetical importance. It evidently refers to a creature doomed to desolate loneliness. “The jackals appear often as inhabitants of waste and desert places. I will make Jerusalem heaps, a dwelling of jackals, and the cities of Judah a wilderness without an inhabitant” (Isa. xiii. 22; xxxiv. 13; xliii. 20).—*Hengstenberg*.

Ver. 20, 21.—“*If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god; shall not God search this out? for He knoweth the secrets of the heart.*” This language is used in confirmation of the assertion in verses 17 and 18.

Ver. 22.—“*Yea, for Thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.*” “So far are we from having forgotten Thee and the covenant of our God, that we are continually persecuted just because we are so faithful to Thee. St. Paul’s quotation of this verse (Rom. viii. 36) proves that the ulterior application reaches beyond the immediate occasion, and that the Spirit designed it for those in all ages who are exposed by their faithfulness to persecution” (2 Tim. iii. 12).—*Dr. Faussett*.

Ver. 23, 24.—“*Awake, why sleepest Thou, O Lord? arise, cast us not off for ever. Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face, and forgettest our affliction and our oppression?*” The Almighty is here referred to as if He were asleep, as if He concealed His face, as if He were forgetful. All is figure of course; all that is meant is, that His non-interposition on

this occasion appeared to His people as if He were asleep, turned away His face from them and forgot them altogether. The Bible is highly anthropomorphic in its representations of God.

Ver. 25, 26.—“*For our soul is bowed down to the dust : our belly cleaveth unto the earth. Arise for our help, and redeem us for Thy mercies' sake.*” “*For our soul is bowed down to the dust, our body cleaveth to the earth. Oh, arise for our help, and redeem us for Thy loving-kindness' sake.*”—*Delitzsch.*

ARGUMENT.—Some divide this psalm into five strophes. The first containing a statement of God's great kindness to His people in past times (ver. 1-3). The second containing a statement of the assurance that they would yet triumph over their enemies (ver. 4-7). The third containing a contrast between the past and present of their history (ver. 8-16). The fourth containing a plea for deliverance on the ground of their faithfulness to God (ver. 17-22). The fifth, an invocation to the Almighty to interpose on their behalf (ver. 23-26).

HOMILETICS.—The whole psalm may be taken as illustrating certain aspects of NATIONAL PIETY. Here it appears First: *As acknowledging God's providential kindness in the past.* Secondly: *As deploring His apparent disregard to the nation at the present.* Thirdly: *As avowing fidelity to Him, notwithstanding the seeming alterations in His conduct.* Fourthly: *As invoking His interposition to restore past privileges.*

There is such a thing as National piety. By this I do not mean the mere conventional religion of a country, represented in the formalities of church and chapel, creeds, liturgies, and sermons; but I mean the aggregation of genuine godly thought, sympathy, and aspiration, whether found in the breast of paupers or princes. Though the vast majority of a nation be infidel and profligate, there may yet be National piety. For example, the true Church of England is not the State institution, but the community of godly souls in England, however few or many, whether known as Papists or Protestants, Conformists or Dissenters. They are united by a common and indissoluble feeling of sympathy and love; and their profoundest experience is one and the same in all questions referring to spiritual sentiment and obligations to God. Let us now mark its aspects as revealed in this psalm, for we must regard the writer as a *representative* patriot saint,

and as speaking in the name of the godly portion of his country. Here we have it represented,—

I. AS ACKNOWLEDGING GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL KINDNESS TO THE NATION IN THE PAST. This we have in the first eight verses. "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us," etc., etc. There are three things referred to in this psalm concerning God's goodness to the Hebrew people in the past.

First: The *certain assurance* of it. "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us." We have heard it, not as a theological fiction, but as an historical fact—heard it, not from conventional teachers, but from our own fathers, who would not deceive us, and who told it to us in love. God's merciful interpositions on behalf of the Hebrew people are amongst the most authenticated facts in the history of mankind. They are recorded, not only in the annals of the chosen people, but in the progress of the human race. Their knowledge has come down, not only in documents and monuments, but through an institution as divine as nature, as old as the race, viz., *parental teaching*.

"Our fathers have told us." Whilst our ancestors have entailed upon us enormous evils, they have transmitted to us glorious facts in connection with God's dealings with mankind. The living generation has ever a two-fold duty—to receive Divine intelligence from the past, and transmit it to the future. Another thing referred to in this psalm concerning God's goodness to the Hebrew people is,—

Secondly: The *striking manifestations* of it. "How Thou didst drive out the heathen with Thy hand, and plantedst them; how Thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out," etc. Who cleared the promised land of the many powerful tribes that had inherited it for centuries—the Amorites, Hittites, the mighty sons of Anak, and others? Did Joshua and his small cowardly and undisciplined army? No; it was the mysterious God-man whom he saw under the walls of Jericho with the sword drawn in His hand. He did it, did it through their feeble instrumentality. Let us learn to recognise God's mighty hand in all our national deliverances from foreign

foes. It is not our navies and our armies that have saved us and made us what we are, but God. The other thing referred to in this psalm concerning God's goodness to the Hebrew people is,—

Thirdly: The *practical influence* of it. What is the influence of the memory of God's past kindness to a nation? Here it is. (1) *Loyalty* towards God. "Thou art my King, O God." Human kings, at best, what are they? Fallible and frail, swayed by errors; and soon swept into dust and oblivion. Because Thou hast done such great things for my country, I own Thee king, "King of kings, and Lord of lords." (2) *Confidence* in God. "Command deliverances for Jacob. Through Thee will we push down our enemies: through Thy Name will we tread them under that rise up against us. For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me. But Thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us." I have no confidence in my own power. My might is weakness. "I will not trust in my bow," etc. My confidence is in Thy word. Thou deliverest by a "command," and by Thy Name we can crush our enemies for ever. Such is the practical influence which a right remembrance of God's goodness effects.

This is what national piety does. Whilst the wicked men in the country see nothing in the past of their history but chance or human effort, and ascribe the good that has come down to them to warriors, discoverers, scientific investigators, and civilizing arts, the piety of a nation looks back and sees the God who is all in all.

Here we have national piety represented—

II. *As DEPLORING GOD'S PRESENT APPARENT DISPLEASURE TOWARD THE NATION.* The patriot poet seems from the ninth to the sixteenth verses to regard the Almighty as having deserted his country. All seemed darkness and confusion.

He saw his country—(1) *Defeated*: "But Thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies." He seems to say, we struggle but succeed not; there is no victory for us; we are foiled in all our efforts. (2) *Victimized*:

"They which hate us spoil for themselves. Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat." We are made use of by our enemies. They feed and fatten upon our weakness. (3) Enslaved: "Thou sellest Thy people for nought and dost not increase Thy wealth by their price." We have lost our liberty and are in a state of vassalage, and no good comes out of our bondage—no glory to Thee and no bliss to humanity. (4) Confounded: "My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of Thy face hath covered me," etc. I am ashamed and bewildered. We have lost our dignity and self-command. We are in confusion. (5) Scorned: "Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us. Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people." The word of scorn, the sneer of scorn, the look of scorn, the nod of scorn seldom fails to bear inexpressible anguish into the heart of the object. Scorn is an arrow that carries with it a rankling poison. Such is the wretched condition in which the patriot poet, glowing with national piety, beheld his country. What a contrast to former days! The God who did wonders of mercy for His people before, seems now to have turned against them. Ah, it is ever so to the eye of piety. When piety looks upon a nation that is impotent for noble deeds, enslaved by sinful habits, fattening the moral enemies of mankind,—ambition, greed, and selfishness,—the contempt of the pure and the noble, it feels that God has deserted it, that He has given it over to its own wickedness.

Here we have national piety represented,—

III. AS AVOWING FIDELITY TO GOD NOTWITHSTANDING THE CALAMITIES OF THE COUNTRY. The poet speaks in the name of all the pious of the land. And here declares that notwithstanding shortcomings, moral mistakes, and severe political affliction, in the main it was true to the laws and claim of God. He declares two things.

First: *A consciousness of fidelity to Heaven.* "All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten Thee, neither have we dealt falsely in Thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back,

neither have our steps declined from Thy way." "What is here professed," says Alexander, "is not entire exemption from all acts of infidelity, but freedom from the deadly sin of total oblivion and apostasy." We have been true in the main, notwithstanding the afflictions that have come upon us. "Though Thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death." Though we appear in utter desolation, the mere victims and associates of dragons,—creatures that haunt old ruins,—and covered with the shadow of death, we have held on to our confidence in the One true God; we have eschewed idolatry. This Thou knowest. "Shall not God search this out? For He knoweth the secrets of the heart." This is what genuine piety always feels, whatever may be its trials and imperfections, it holds tenaciously to the One true and living God. He declares,

Secondly: *Persecution on account of their fidelity.* "For Thy sake are we killed all the day long." Because we have been true to Thee, we have been persecuted and tormented by infidels and idolaters. The whole verse is a strong poetical description of severe persecution or distress arising from the spite of enemies, and as such is applied by Paul to the sufferings of the Church of Christ, in which the ancient Israel continues to exist. (See Rom. viii. 36.)

What a sublime state of mind is this! What an ineffable privilege, to be enabled under great calamities and a consciousness of many moral imperfections to look to Heaven and say, "Whom have I in heaven, but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever." Observe three things (1) Genuine piety may co-exist with great suffering. It did so now, it ever has done so; Abraham, David, Job, Paul, are examples. (2) Genuine piety may be stimulated by great suffering. The suffering of the nation now seemed to stimulate the piety of the poet and those whom he represented. "Our light afflictions which are but for a moment," etc. (3) Genuine piety enables one to bear great sufferings. "I had fainted unless I had

believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

Here we have national piety represented,—

IV. AS INVOKING GOD'S INTERPOSITION IN ORDER TO RESTORE PAST PRIVILEGES. In this invocation there are three things deserving attention.

First: *A humanification of Deity.* "Awake, why sleepest Thou, O Lord? Arise, cast us not off for ever. Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face, and forgettest our affliction and our oppression?" God does not sleep; God does not hide His face; God does not forget—all this is human. The God of an intelligent creature must always be formed out of and fashioned by his own ideas, impulses, and intuitions. Hence the God before whom seraphs bow must differ widely from that God to whom mankind render homage. No creature can have a complete conception of the Absolute. Another thing deserving attention here is—

Secondly: *Utter prostration of being.* "Our soul is bowed down to the dust, our belly cleaveth unto the earth." "Bowed to the dust is our soul, fixed to the earth is our belly." What stronger expression could there be of depression and degradation than this? In a moral sense all men are thus debased and crushed by sin. The other thing deserving attention here is,—

Thirdly: *Entire dependence on sovereign mercy.* "Arise for our help, and redeem us for Thy mercies' sake." We cannot redeem ourselves, nor can we plead our own merits or excellences as a reason for Thy interposition. We throw ourselves on Thy mercy, for nothing can save us but Thy mercy. This is the only plea fallen man can urge before his Maker.

CONCLUSION. There is some amount of piety perhaps in every nation, whatever its material affliction and moral depravities may be. There are some righteous men even in our Sodoms; and the experience of these men is identical with that of godly men in all lands and times. It keenly feels for the sufferings of the people, bewails deeply and devoutly their moral iniquities and abominations, and earnestly implores mercy from Heaven for their foes.

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Job.

The Book of Job is one of the grandest sections of Divine Scripture. It has never yet, to our knowledge, been treated in a purely Homiletic method for Homiletic ends. Besides many learned expositions on the book found in our general commentaries, we have special exegetical volumes of good scholarly and critical worth; such as Drs. Barnes, Wemyss, Mason Goode, Noyes Lee, Delitzsch, and Herman Helwig Bernard: the last is in every way a masterly production. For us, therefore, to go into philology and verbal criticism, when such admirable works are available to all students, would be superfluous, if not presumption. Ambiguous terms, when they occur, we shall of course explain, and occasionally suggest an improved rendering; but our work will be chiefly, if not entirely, Homiletic. We shall essay to bring out from the grand old words those Divine verities which are true and vital to man as man in all lands and ages. These truths we shall frame in an order as philosophic and suggestive as our best powers will enable us to do; and this in order to help the earnest preachers of God's Holy Word.

Subject: The Third Speech of Eliphaz. (1) The Theological Section.

"Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,
Can a man be profitable unto God,
As he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?
Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous?
Or is it gain to Him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?
Will He reprove thee for fear of thee?
Will He enter with thee into judgment?"

JOB xxii. 1-4.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS: VER. 2.—"*Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?*" "*Is a man profitable unto God? No; indeed the intelligent man is profitable unto himself.*"—*Delitzsch*. The idea is, that a wise man may by his conduct serve himself, but that no efforts of his can be of any advantage to the Almighty.

VER. 3.—"*Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to Him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?*" This is almost a repetition of the same idea, viz., that the Almighty is in no way benefited by our conduct, however wise or righteous.

VER. 4.—"*Will He reprove thee for fear of thee? will He enter with thee into judgment?*" "*Will He reason with thee because He standeth in awe of thee? Will He enter into judgment with thee?*"—*Dr. Bernard*. The idea seems to be this, that inasmuch as God is absolutely independent of human conduct, He will not condescend to enter into an argument as to His treatment of man. Job seems often to express a wish that God would go into judicial discussion with him, and Eliphaz here intimates that such a thing was not to be expected from one so great as God.

HOMILETICS.—In this address of Eliphaz, running on to the close of the chapter, there are four distinct classes of remark—theological, recriminatory, historical, and admonitory. This section comprises the first class, viz., the theological, and includes two general truths.

I. That the great God is perfectly INDEPENDENT OF MAN'S CHARACTER, WHETHER RIGHT OR WRONG. "Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to Him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?"

First: He is so independent of it that *He is not affected by it*. No hellish crimes can lessen His felicity; no heavenly virtue can heighten His blessedness. He is the Eternal fountain of purity and happiness. Were hell quenched, He would be no happier; were heaven annihilated, His glory would neither be dimmed nor His blessedness diminished. "If thou sinnest, what doest thou against Him, or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto Him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou Him? or what receiveth He of thine hand?" He is infinitely more independent of all the virtues in heaven than the orb of day is independent of a candle's feeble rays, more independent of all the crimes of hell than noontide brightness is of a mere whiff of smoke. He is not worshipped with men's hands as though He needed anything. This fact should impress us (1) With the duty of humility. He is independent of the most righteous services of the highest intelligence in the universe. None are necessary to the carrying out of His purposes. He can do without us, let us be humble. The fact should impress us (2) With the benevolence of His legislation. Why does He lay down laws for the regulation of human conduct? Simply and entirely for our own happiness. He requires us to worship Him because in worship alone our natures can be harmoniously developed. The moral code of the universe originates in sovereign love. God's laws are but love speaking in the imperative mood.

Secondly: He is so independent of it that He will *not condescend to explain His treatment of it*. "Will He reprove thee

for fear of thee? Will He enter with thee into judgment?" One great cause of Job's murmuring was, that God had sent punishment upon him without any explanation. For this Eliphaz here reproves him, and virtually says, "Is it not in the highest degree absurd to expect that the Maker should be willing to explain His doings to the creatures He has made? When a man requires an explanation from his fellow-man, he thinks, of course, he has a right to demand it of him, and forms his expectation of its being given upon the feelings of respect or fear with which he conceives himself to be regarded by him to whom he addresses the demand. But can a man expect God to give an explanation of His dealings with him from any such motives?" What blasphemous folly it is to expect the Almighty to give an account of His doings!

The other general truth here is—That whilst the great God is perfectly independent of man's character, whether right or wrong,—

II. MAN'S CHARACTER IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO HIMSELF. "He that is wise may be profitable unto himself." Eliphaz means to say that the wise and pious man is profitable to himself. To the man himself, character is everything. The wealth of Cræsus, the strength of Samson, the wisdom of Solomon, and the dominion of Cæsar are nothing to a man in comparison to his character. His character is the fruit of his existence, the organ of his power, the law of his destiny. It is the only property he carries with him beyond the grave—that out of which his hell will blaze or his paradise bloom. Whilst my character is nothing to the Almighty Maker and Monarch of the universe, it is everything to me. The man who is cultivating an ungodly character here, is going every moment into "everlasting punishment;" whilst he who is cherishing principles and forming habits of Christly virtue, is going every moment into a "life eternal." The grand object of Christ in the world was to enable men to form this character. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that,

denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of God, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of God."

Germs of Thought.

Subject: Believing in Christ, better than Seeing Him.

"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."—JOHN xx. 29.

WHEN our Lord was on earth, Thomas was a faithful follower. He was a genuine disciple, not only because of what he had forsaken for Christ's sake, but because he followed Him in *faith*. He believed Him to be the true Messiah with a faith so strong that it triumphed over his love of life; for on one memorable occasion he deliberately offered to lay it down at the feet of his Lord.

† Lazarus dies. Jesus must go and miraculously bring him back to life. The other disciples are afraid of accompanying their Lord into Judea, and of braving the hatred of the Jews; but Thomas said: "Let us too go, that we may *die with Him*," at once showing his fidelity to, and his unwavering faith in, Christ.

I know that some commentators would alter the punctuation, and change the meaning of that loyal exclamation. They would most unwarrantably make it expressive of doubt and fear, instead of faith and magnanimity. But the common version is undoubtedly the correct one. If the words mean anything, they mean, that *at that time*, Thomas was ready and willing to die with Christ; and that willingness was only the offspring of his unshaken faith in the Messiah. But Christ dies and is buried. Where are His *followers*. Yes; emphasize that word, for are they His followers now? Where is their *faith*? Is it centred in the *unseen* Christ, as it was in

the *visible* Christ? Doubt and dread fill the minds of all. They have lost sight of the Conqueror of Death and think of Him as conquered. An angel is despatched from heaven to recall to their forgetful minds the resurrection predictions of the Galilean. Their doubt had dulled their memories—might I not say? deranged their minds. Strange, that they should have looked upon the cross as the culmination of all—that they did not look beyond! Strange, that all their fond hopes should have been buried in that garden-grave! Strange, that when they were told of the resurrection by credible witnesses they were so slow to believe! Strange, superlatively strange, that Thomas, whose faith had been sufficient to constrain him to die with his Master rather than not go with Him into Judea, should now be the most unbelieving of all! While *they* were reluctant to believe the announcement of the Resurrection, *he* was determined to doubt it. He said flatly: "I will not believe until I have tangible evidence that my Lord is alive, until I put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into the spear-gashed side."

Do not condemn the man. His incredulity is one of the invulnerable evidences of the Resurrection. Others might be imposed upon; not he. Others might be credulous enough to believe without seeing; *he*, only with handling the body of the risen Lord.

Do not condemn him. Think of the constitution of his mind. Men are mentally dissimilar. Some *cannot* reason: others are constitutionally compelled to submit all truth and testimony to this touchstone. The sentimentalist and the rationalist are different in mental constitution—the heart of the rationalist is not necessarily a whit less sincere than the heart of the sentimentalist. Thomas was as anxious as the rest to believe the resurrection fact, but he must have other evidence than that which satisfied them. They may have seen an apparition. He must feel the sacred flesh—the hands and feet that had been torn with the nails, and the side that had been rent with the spear. Do not condemn him, because Christ did not. He submitted Himself to the rationalistic test. "Reach hither

thy finger," etc. It is true, that when Thomas was satisfied our Lord ventured a mild rebuke; but even that was given, I believe, not so much in chastisement as because it was an appropriate time and occasion for the utterance of a great truth. "Because thou *hast seen*, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that *have not seen* and yet have believed." In expounding these words, let me state,—

I. THAT MANY SAW CHRIST IN THE FLESH WHO DID NOT BELIEVE IN HIM.

Because He won the faith of only a little limited number, our Lord's life, considered as a life of beneficence and miracle, is fittingly characterized as a comparative failure. How expressive of the inveterate unbelief of the Jewish nation is that prophetic wail: "He came to His own, and His own received Him not"! The Jewish nation answered to the "barren fig-tree" of which Christ metaphorically spoke. He went to it desiring to find fruit, but found little else than leaves. As the Messiah, "He was despised and rejected of men."

1. *Think of the personal proofs which He gave of His Messiahship.* (1) *His wondrous words*, which caused men of steeled sensibilities to exclaim, "Never man spake like this man!" which drew from a learned Rabbi the eulogium, "We know that Thou art a teacher come from God"—words at which the priests and doctors listened with astonishment in the synagogue, and which the crowds of "common people heard gladly." (2) *His miraculous works*, which were acknowledged as such by the Sanhedrim council that plotted His death: "That this man doeth many miracles there is no gainsaying." (3) *His unique life.*

2. *Think of the witnesses that attested His Messiahship.* The angels appeared at His Birth and charmed the shepherds with their sublime song and melodious minstrelsy. At His Baptism God proclaimed by a voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son," while the Spirit descended on Him like a dove. The blind to whom He gave sight, the deaf whom He caused to hear, the possessed, out of whom He cast the unclean

spirits, the very devils themselves that He cast out, the cripples that He cured, the dead that He raised—all testified to Him by publicly proclaiming Him to be the Christ.

How was it that the multitudes admitted the proofs and yet disbelieved that which was evidenced and demonstrated? Account for it as you like, attribute the unbelief to perverted judgments, to perverse, prejudiced hearts, to polluted lives: still the fact stands forth in all its awful significance, and cannot be excused or palliated.

It is a sad and striking fact, that our Lord's most remarkable words and His most wondrous works were *immediately* rewarded with wicked abuse. He emphatically declares His eternal Divinity (Matt. viii. 58; Exod. iii. 14); and the people search for stones with which to stone Him. Then again, He brings Lazarus to life, who has been dead four days; and some went straight away from the scene, and, for the most malicious reasons, reported to the priests what they had witnessed. Soon after, Jesus was crucified; and the *connection* between the raising of Lazarus and the crucifixion of Christ I need not stop to explain. And what mean the following words? "Then began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not;" "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief;" "And he could there do no mighty work . . . And He marvelled because of their unbelief." Sad picture that—Christ marvelling at His own failure and at their folly! They looked upon Him in the flesh; they listened to His words of grace and truth; with their own eyes they witnessed His beneficent and miraculous works, the cumulative, almost overwhelming, evidences of His Divinity, and yet they disbelieved and delivered Him to death! No wonder, indeed, that He should say, "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." Believing is better than seeing. Were not those who saw the Saviour in the flesh exceedingly privileged? Unquestionably they were. Their use or abuse of the privilege is another question. It were surely a blessed thing to see Christ, but it is a more blessed thing to believe in Him.

The higher privilege is ours. Believing in Christ is better than seeing Him. Because seeing will not *satisfy*. It is only by *trusting* Christ that the soul is at rest and satisfied. Because seeing will not *save*. It is faith, not sight, that obtains salvation. "*Believe* in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;" not, "behold Him in the flesh, and thou shalt be saved." I repeat, that it would be an exalted privilege to look upon the Son of God incarnate; but that sight might be our condemnation, as it was the condemnation of many. It would not save us. Faith in His Son is God's *one* appointed way of salvation. Better, far better, than beholding Christ in the flesh, is believing in Him while bodily He is absent. Therefore, "Blessed are they," etc.

I go a step further, and state,—

II. THAT BELIEVING WITHOUT SEEING IS BETTER THAN BELIEVING AND SEEING. This is evidently the special meaning of the text. Thomas would not believe in the Risen Lord until he saw Him. Not until, by sight and by touch, he satisfied himself of the truth of Christ's resurrection did he exclaim: "My Lord and my God!" and Jesus replied, "You have reached the certainty of faith at last; but blessed are they who believe in the Risen Christ without touching and without seeing Him."

Such faith is—

1. *More genuine in its nature.* Faith is the antithesis of sight. The apostle calls it "the evidence of things not seen," the inward evidence. Faith does not exclude outward evidence, the evidence of testimony. It does not exclude, absolutely, the evidence of the senses—of sight, of touch; but sight and touch are not faith; and the faith to which they lead is not so genuine and noble as that which is reached without them. Thomas believed when he saw Christ, or after he had seen and handled Him; but that evidence of his senses *circumscribed the sphere of his faith*. His faith amounted to this. "I believe my eyes do not deceive me, that they are not looking upon an apparition or a personification. I believe my hands do not deceive me, that

e wounds I have touched are the wounds of the Crucified Christ. You see, his senses showed the Resurrection to be an actual fact. He was compelled to believe it or to say, "My sense of touch and sight is untrue and not to be depended upon;" and because he did not say that, did not think that, did not believe that, we say he believed in the Risen Christ. What was there of nobility in a faith like that? compared with his who, in the absence of such evidence, or anything approaching to it, says, "My Lord and my God!" Because we cannot see Christ in the flesh, and because in consequence the sphere of our faith is *larger and wider*, we may have a more pure faith, a nobler faith than Thomas, who believed not in the Resurrection until he saw and touched the Risen Body. The Resurrection was revealed to Thomas through flesh and blood—his own flesh and blood brought into conscious contact with the flesh and blood of Christ. Blessed are they who have the revelation from heaven!

Many men base their faith on the historical evidence of Christianity; they believe because they have tested the evidences and have found them true. That is a higher faith than the faith of Thomas; but there is a faith higher still—the faith of those who rest their souls upon the bare truth, unsupported by historical proofs. "To believe, not because we are learned and can prove, but because there is something in us, even God's own Spirit, which makes us feel Light as light, and Truth as true; that is the more blessed faith."* Some men call that a blind credulity, and say, "We cannot believe after that fashion." We do not ask you. If your mental and spiritual condition are such that you cannot believe without subjecting the bulwarks of Christianity to a severe test, then subject them to a severe test; they will stand testing.

If you have nothing *within* you responding to Christ, constraining you to say with the Herodians, "Master, we know that Thou art true," then analyse the proofs, arraign the

* Robertson.

miracles, subject to rigid criticism the outward life and inner character of Christ, and examine the internal and external evidence of the authenticity and harmony of the Gospels; but still we must tell you, that if you are making your faith utterly dependent on that, you are incapable of the higher, purer, nobler, faith of those who, without all this, are inwardly constrained to believe and love and serve the Risen Christ.

To believe without seeing, is better than believing and seeing, because such faith is—

2. *More uplifting in its tendency.* Spiritual greatness is the child of faith. Men must go out of themselves and take hold of the Invisible before they can rise to the true platform of their nature. Let them believe in nothing beyond the low horizon of their senses, and in soul-stature they are small. The Divinest aspirations, the truest exaltations of being, the most blessed hopes, come from faith in that which is *unseen*. To believe in an absent Christ is better for the education of the soul, for the development of its spiritual powers, than if He were still on earth. Was it not so for the early disciples? While He was with them they were materialistic and selfish. They never became true spiritual men until they learned to believe in the *Invisible*.

3. *Such faith is more honouring to its object.* They honour Christ more than Thomas did, who, though they have never seen nor touched Him, believe in Him, trust Him, cast their sins upon His sacrifice, carry their sorrows to His sympathy, by faith and prayer, love Him with the deepest purest love of their hearts.

4. *Such faith is more rich in its recompense.* "Blessed are they," etc. "Blessed!" What does that word mean? More than I can tell. The reward is present and prospective. They are blessed *now* in their faith and for their faith. And they shall be blessed *hereafter*. In the Day of Judgment Christ will own those who now own Him, honour those who now honour Him. He still lives. The Carpenter's Son is now the crowned King of Heaven!

"We saw Thee not when Thou didst tread,
O Saviour! this our sinful earth;
Nor heard Thy voice restore the dead,
And waken them to second birth;
Yet we believe that Thou *didst* come
And quit for us Thy glorious home.

"We were not with the faithful few
Who stood Thy bitter cross around;
Nor heard Thy prayer for those who slew,
Nor felt the earthquake rock the ground:
We saw no spear-thrust pierce Thy side,
But we believe that Thou *hast* died.

"We saw Thee not return on high;
And now, our longing sight to bless,
No ray of glory from the sky
Shines down upon our wilderness;
But we believe that *Thou art there*,
And seek Thee, Lord, in praise and prayer."

Blessed is he who, though he cannot see nor touch the
Risen Christ, can say from his heart, "*My Lord and my*
God!"

ENOCH D. SOLOMON.

Subject: Jonah's Flight.

"Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went."—JONAH i. 3.

JONAH signifies a *dove*. A significant and proper name for all God's prophets. His father's name was Amittai, —My Truth. All the Lord's prophets should be sons of *truth*. The text presents three facts for our consideration.

I. A MAN COLLAPSING BEFORE THE GREAT OCCASIONS OF LIFE.
"The word of the Lord came to Jonah." . . . "And Jonah rose up to flee." Human life does not always continue on the same key. Somewhere in the history of most men, God arrests the old monotonous tune and strikes the key-note to a loftier anthem. Everything depends upon how *we strike* the pitch and follow His leading voice. There are hours in the life of every man, compared with which all after hours are poor and commonplace—great critical hours, pregnant

with the possibilities of destiny and manhood. To fall below those great occasions, is to suffer a loss which time cannot repair. The man who does, will go like Jacob, halting on his withered thigh to the grave. My young brother, those critical hours are before you somewhere. Do you ask, "How may I be able to meet them successfully?" Be faithful and true where you are. Discharge faithfully the duties which lie within the sphere of to-day. No man can be ready for the great occasions of life who is not faithfully discharging the duties lying nearest to his hand.

"Work for the good that is highest,
Dream not of greatness afar,
That glory is ever the highest,
That shines upon men as they are."

II. A MAN REBELLING AGAINST GOD, AND YET STRANGELY FAVOURED BY CIRCUMSTANCES. "He found a ship going to Tarshish." Rightly to interpret circumstances, is one of the most difficult things in life; and when a man gets loose at the conscience, he may so interpret them as to embolden and fortify him in his iniquity. Here was a ship just ready to leave. Some were weary with waiting, perhaps, and wondered at the delay. Soon Jonah came at full speed and jumped on board, and in a moment they were off. The captain almost said by his looks, "I should have been off five minutes ago, only for you." How natural for Jonah to have said, "Well, there, surely I am not so bad after all, or Providence would not have had this ship waiting for me." There is a necessity put upon the sinner to project by his own foolish imagination a sort of divine oversight, in the sphere of circumstances, in order to somewhat allay the wild commotion within.

A life of sin would be simply intolerable were it not for the ships of one kind or another that are waiting to give us a further ride. If no ship were to have left Joppa for ten days, calm reflection and conscience might have sent Jonah back to Nineveh. Many a man has had reason to thank God that the ship went before he got to Joppa. There are many faithful men crying against the iniquity of to-day, who when the word

of the Lord first came to them started for Tarshish; but finding no ship at Joppa, and thereby time for solemn self-questions and prayer, they turned back and are working manfully at their post. Much charity should be exercised towards those whose very circumstances almost invite their further continuance in sin.

III. A MAN DISHONEST WITH GOD, YET PROMPT AND CONSCIENTIOUS IN OBSERVING THE LAWS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY. "Jonah paid the fare." Honest with the owner of the ship, but dishonest with the Owner of the universe! This is what thousands are doing to-day. By attention to isolated points of morality, they try to make up what they lack in the sterling completeness of Christian character. Right in minor points, but wrong in major principles. When, in speaking well of a man, you find it necessary to run out on little spear-like points of his character, and there balance yourself while you say, "He paid his fare to Tarshish," he was a man of truth and honest dealing, a good husband, a good neighbour; you show his weakness rather than his strength. If Jonah had shunned paying his fare, his danger could not have been increased, but his sense of safety would have been greatly disturbed. The displeasure of God and man would have turned the ship into an intolerable prison. Many a man is taking quite a comfortable ride to perdition, because he pays his fare, and has his ticket of public confidence and social honour.

APPLICATION.—(1) The word of the Lord still comes to men. Let us try to keep an attitude of expectancy and an open ear. (2) When God calls a man to go to Nineveh, there is success or safety nowhere else. (3) To flee to Tarshish is a most terrible mistake, and must end in sorrow and disappointment, no matter how many ships may be waiting for us at Joppa. (4) Acts of morality cannot atone for disobedience to God's commands. For the Lord caused a mighty tempest in the sea, and Jonah is thrown overboard, ticket and all.

T. KELLY, M.A.

America.

The Preacher's Finger-Post.

**Subject: THE DIGNITY AND
BLESSEDNESS OF CHRISTLY
MANHOOD.**

"For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ."—*COLOSSIANS* ii. 5.

There is no evidence that Paul founded the Church at Colosse, or indeed that he had ever visited the place. This makes the deep interest in their spiritual condition expressed in this verse and elsewhere all the more remarkable and significant. This epistle was written from Rome, where Paul was a prisoner, and conveyed by Tychicus, an Asiatic by birth who accompanied Paul in his last journey to Jerusalem. This Tychicus is described (*Acts* xix. 24) as a well-beloved and faithful brother. Onesimus,—also, we are told, a Colossian,—once the runaway slave of Philemon, who is described by Paul as a faithful and beloved brother, was united with Tychicus in the delivery of this epistle. The letter is divided into two distinct parts: the first two chapters are polemical, the third and fourth are practical.

There are three things in this passage which suggest certain things concerning the

greatness and happiness of Christly men.

I. Here is a **DISTINGUISHING POWER** in human nature. The power is this,—a capacity for being in the spirit where the body is not. "Though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit." Paul's body was at Rome in bonds, yet his spirit—himself—he tells us here, was at Colosse. Here is a power which no other sentient existence on this earth seems to possess. The home of the brute is confined to the immediate spot which his body occupies. Not so with man; his body is in one place and his soul in another. His body may be here and his spirit at the Antipodes, or even in another world. Who is not conscious of this power? What are those mental moods that we call reverie, abstraction, ecstasy? How often do we feel ourselves in scenes remote from those occupied by our body! Elsewhere Paul says that his spirit was transported to the third heavens, where it heard unutterable things. Christ recognised this fact in human nature, "Where your treasure is, there shall your heart—yourself—be also." It is a psychological law, that the spirit of man lives in that

which interests him most. If those scenes are beyond the ocean, he is there, or even beyond the stars, he is there.

First: This fact explains the happiness of Christly men under the greatest physical sufferings. Prisoners like Paul and Silas have exulted in a liberty which no walls or chains can curtail, no despot touch. Martyrs like Latimer and Cranmer have triumphed in the flames; and Christly men now, as in every age, are often sublimely happy under circumstances the most painful and disastrous.

Secondly: This fact predicts the wonderful liberty of the spirit when disengaged from its material organization. How free must be the "spirits of just men made perfect." What is distance to them? They transport themselves to distant scenes swift as thought. Who will say that departed spirits are not constant visitants to those mundane scenes where they commenced their existence, and where those live who are still dear to their hearts?

II. Here is a BLESSED SOCIAL CONDITION of human nature. What is that? "Order" and the "steadfastness of faith" in Jesus Christ. In the second verse Paul speaks of the Christly society at Colosse as being "knit together" as a well-organized body. There was amongst them—

First: *Social unity.* They

were "knit together." Amongst them there was no discord or division, they were one with their Master in sympathy and aim. It does not mean that they all thought alike; this would be neither possible nor desirable. Diversity of opinion is not only consonant with the most perfect social unity, but is even necessary to it. There was amongst them—

Secondly: A social unity based upon faith in Christ. "The steadfastness of your faith in Christ." Christ is the centre of all true social unity. He gathers together in one chief love, in one chief aim, all human spirits. What a blessed social condition is this! Would that it were universal, and that all ecclesiastical sects were lost in it as the little pools on the sea shore are lost in the advancing tide.

III. Here is an ELEVATED SOURCE OF ENJOYMENT for human nature. What is the source of joy here specified?

First: *Purely philanthropic.* It was joy arising from the true happiness of others. "Beholding your order." The joy was not of any personal gain to himself, or of the mere secular prosperity of others, but their true spiritual elevation. He rejoiced to see goodness spreading. Like Barnabas, he was glad when he saw the grace of God.

Secondly: *Truly religious.*

He saw that God was honoured by this state of "order and steadfastness in the faith."

CONCLUSION: What a glorious state of manhood is revealed in these few words! How great a power has man naturally—a power to live in two worlds at once, furnished with a system by which all the various grades, classes, races of the world, may be "knit together" in love and heart, endowed with a generosity enabling it to arrive at the highest happiness of others and the glory of God. What is man?

Subject: THE INTERNAL WORKINGS OF GENUINE REPENTANCE.

"For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter."—2 Cor. vii. 11.

The Bible says a deal about repentance, its *nature*—Job xlii. 5; Psalm li.; Ezekiel xxxvi. 35; Matt. xxvi. 24; Luke xv. 35; xviii. 13; 2 Cor. vii. 9. About the *necessity* of repentance—Ezekiel xiv. 6; Matt. iii. 1; iv. 17; Luke xiii. 13; Acts iii. 19; Revelation ii. 5; etc., etc.

The preceding verse has already engaged our attention, in which was contrasted godly

and worldly sorrows—contrasted as to their nature and results.* This verse leads us to consider the internal workings of genuine repentance, and several *phenomena* are specified here.

I. SOLICITUDE. "Behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness" (*σπουδή*). Men who have repented are no longer unconcerned about spiritual matters, but are cautious, careful, diligent. They do not walk as fools, but as wise men, "redeeming the time." The necessity of carefulness may be argued from three facts. First: The *corrupting influences of social life*. Secondly: The *agency of tempting spirits*. The great arch-tempter has millions of tempting spirits under his command. They all work insidiously, skilfully, persistently. Thirdly: The *remaining depravity of our own nature*. In the best of men in this life some elements of depravity remain more or less powerful. These are tinder for the devil's fire, a fulcrum for the devil's lever. Hence be careful.

II. DEPRECATION. "What clearing of yourselves." The meaning is, how anxious to show your disapproval of the evil of which you have been guilty. Instead of covering it up you confess it, instead

* See page 53.

of excusing it, you denounce it. You deprecate your past life, as an outrage on morality, as an offence to Heaven. Thus genuine repentance ever works. The converted drunkard denounces drunkenness, the converted liar denounces falsehood, the converted debauchee denounces unchastity, the converted thief denounces dishonesty, etc. Thus the repentant sinner is anxious to clear himself of it.

III. **ANGER.** "What indignation!" Against what? Against sin as sin, wrong as wrong. Repentance generates a deadly hatred to evil. This is a holy anger. We have little faith in the moral excellency of those who cannot go into flames of indignation whenever the wrong appears before them. There is a time to hate. There is no good man who is not a hater.

"Rough Johnson the great moralist
professed

Right honestly he liked an honest
hater."

"Who is offended and I burn not," says Paul. The stronger a man's love for the right, the more tremendous his anger against the wrong. Strong love for the thing loved, necessitates strong hate for the thing hated. "Dante, who loved well because he hated, hated wickedness because he loved."—*Browning*. When a repentant soul muses not only on the sins of others,

but on his own past sins, the fires of indignation kindle into a blaze. The man who has not indignation for sin has never repented. "Do not I hate them, O God, that hate Thee,?"

IV. **DREAD.** "What fear!" Fear, not of suffering but of sin; not of God, but of the devil; not of losing property, health, or even life itself, but of losing any of the great elements of moral goodness. This fear is in truth the highest courage. The man who dreads the morally wrong is the true hero. In truth this fear is but a modification of love. It is love dreading to displease or injure in any way the object on which it has centered its affection.

V. **EARNESTNESS.** "What vehement desire!"—what longing for a higher life! "What zeal!"—what intense desire to eschew the wrong and to pursue the right! "What revenge!" (ekdikēsin)—exacting a punishment. What a craving to crush the wrong! All these expressions mean intense earnestness, and earnestness not about temporal matters, which is common and unvirtuous; but about spiritual matters, which is rare and praiseworthy. Genuine repentance is antagonistic to indifference; it generates earnestness in the soul; it leads to the most strenuous efforts, to the most vehement cries to Heaven.

"We are living, we are dwelling
In a grand and awful time,
In an age on ages telling
To be living is sublime.

"Worlds are changing, heaven be-
holding;
Thou hast but an hour to fight;
Love's pure banner, now unfolding
On—right onward for the right.

"From the crimes that men are
crushing,
Man's dire curse and slavery's
wrong,
To deliver him now rushing,
Arm thee well; be strong, be
strong.

"Fear not! spurn the worldling's
laughter;
Friendship's favour trample thou;
Thou shalt find a long hereafter
To be more than tempts thee now.

"Oh, let all the soul within you
For the truth's sake go abroad;
Strike! let every nerve and sinew
Tell on ages—tell for God."

Subject: THE GREATEST SO-
CIAL BLESSING AND THE
GREATEST SOCIAL BANE.

"Lover and friend hast Thou
put far from me."—PSALM lxxxviii.
18.

These words lead us to con-
sider,—

I. The greatest social
BLESSING. What is that?
Friendship. "Lover and
friend." What should we
have done without "lover and
friend?" To them we owe
our *preservation*. Their lov-
ing hand received us into
this strange life; ministered
to our necessities when we
were unconscious babes. Like
guardian angels, they watched

over us through all the help-
lessness of infancy and child-
hood. To them we owe our
progress—in physical strength
and growth, in intellectual
culture and power, in moral
purity, goodness, and force.
Without "lover and friend"
we should be little more than
seed without soil, without
germination or development.
To them we owe our *pleasures*.
The interchange of thoughts
and loves, the intermingling
of heart and soul with them
are amongst our highest en-
joyments. Ah me! what
would life be without "lover
and friend"? It would be as
bloomless and as shrivelled
as plants without water; it
would be utter desolation, an
intolerable burden.

"Hail, friendship; since the world
began,
Heaven's kindest, noblest boon
for man;
All other joys with meteor fire,
Quenched in the mists of time,
expire;
But thou, unhurt by fortune's
blast,
Shin'st brightest, clearest at the
last!
The dreary heart, unwarmed by
thee,
Broods o'er a sullen destiny!
Heaven's fairest gift would fail to
bless
That cold and wintry haunt of
cheerless selfishness."

These words lead us to
consider,—

II. The greatest social BANE.
The bane is the loss of friend-
ship. "Lover and friend hast
Thou put far from me." There

are many ways by which we lose them. Sometimes by *mutual misunderstandings*. Certain things are said, certain deeds are done which are misinterpreted and misrepresented; thus the friendship is disturbed and broken up, and the "lover and the friend" are "put far away" in heart and sympathy. Sometimes by *local changes*. Our "lover and friend" are removed to scenes too distant for mutual visitation and intercourse, and the thoughts of each other die out and memory fades; thus they are lost. But there is one way in which it happens to all, and in which the separation is complete — DEATH. Who that has reached maturity cannot adopt these words, "Lover and friend hast Thou put far from me"?

The older we become, the more extensive the loss, the more profoundly conscious is it felt. Even Byron, who was comparatively a young man, uttered the wail—

"I loved, but those I loved are gone;
Had friends, my friends are fled.

How cheerless feels the heart
alone,
When all its early hopes are
dead."

'Southey, in advanced years, said, "There is now no human being left who can talk with me of old times, not one who nursed me in infancy, nor played with me in my father's house." "To a man," says Dr. Johnson, "who has survived all the friends of his youth, all who have shared his pleasures and his cares, engaged in the same pursuits, and filled their minds with the same conceptions, this full peopled world is a dismal solitude." Ah, how utterly desolate one becomes as one grows old! Fénelon somewhere expressed a wish, that all who were friends should die together on the same day. What old man or woman cannot say with George Herbert:

"What have I left, that I should
stay and groan?
The most of me to heaven is fled;
My thoughts and joys are all
packed up and gone,
And for their old acquaintance
plead."

PRAYER.—"In extemporary prayer what men most admire, God least regardeth: namely, the volubility of the tongue. It is the heart keeping time and tone with the voice which God listeneth unto. Otherwise the humblest tongue tires and loudest voice grows dumb, before it comes half way up to heaven. Only the conformity of the words with the mind, mounted on heavenly thoughts, is acceptable to God."—FULLER.

Seeds of Sermons from the Minor Prophets.

If the Bible as a whole is inspired, it is of vast importance that all its Divine ideas should be brought to bear upon the living world of men. Though the pulpit is the organ Divinely intended for this work, it has been doing it hitherto in a miserably partial and restricted method. It selects isolated passages, and leaves whole chapters and books for the most part untouched. Its conduct to the Minor Prophets may be taken as a case in point. How seldom are they resorted to for texts! and yet they abound with splendid passages throbbing with Divine ideas. It is our purpose to go through this section of the Holy Word; selecting, however, only such verses in each chapter and book as seem the most suggestive of truths of the most vital interest and universal application.

Having passed rapidly through Hosea and Joel, two of the Minor Prophets, we come now to Amos. He, we are informed, was a native of Tekoa, a small region in the tribe of Judah, about twelve miles south-east of Jerusalem. Nothing is known of his parents. He evidently belonged to the humbler class of life, and pursued the occupation of the humble shepherd. From his flock he was divinely called to the high office of prophet; and though himself of the tribe of Judah, his mission was to Israel. He was sent to Bethel, into the kingdom of the ten tribes. He commenced his ministry in the reign of Uzziah, between 810 and 783 a.c., and therefore laboured about the same time as Hosea. In his time idolatry, with its concomitant evils and immoralities of every description, reigned with uncontrolled sway amongst the Israelites, and against these evils he hurled his denunciations. The book has been divided into three parts: "First, sentences pronounced against the Syrians, the Philistines, the Phœnicians, the Edomites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Jews, and the Israelites, chapters i. and ii. Second, special discourses delivered against Israel, chapters iii. to vi. Third, visions, partly of a consolatory and partly of a comminatory nature, in which reference is had both to the times that were to pass over the ten tribes previous to the coming of the Messiah, and to what was to take place under His reign, chapters vii. to ix. His style is marked by perspicuity, elegance, energy, and fulness. His images are mostly original, and taken from the natural scenery with which he was familiar.

No. XCIII.

Subject: NATIONAL DEPRAVITY.

"The Lord God hath sworn by Himself, saith the Lord the God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces: therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein."—Amos vi. 8.

In order to show the voluptuous debauchees referred to in the preceding verses the terrible judgments that would overtake them, Jehovah is here represented as making a solemn oath. Whether the city here refers to Samaria or Jerusalem, or both, is of little moment. The subject is na-

tional depravity, and we infer from the words,—

I. That depravity may EXIST IN A NATION WHERE THERE IS MUCH THAT IS MAGNIFICENT. Here is a reference to the "excellency,"—or, as some render it, the splendour,—"of Jacob;" and here is a reference to "palaces," the homes of princes. There was much that was magnificent amongst the Jewish people of old in their own land. Great cities and their palaces, and, above all, the Temple at Jerusalem, beautiful in architecture and situation, with an organised priesthood and gorgeous cere-

monies. Still its depravity at this time was wide and deep and hideous. A nation may have much that is magnificent, and yet be deeply sunk in moral corruption. Witness ancient Greece and Rome, witness England to-day. The arts, sculpture, painting, architecture, music, have reached their perfection, and abound. On all hands our eyes are attracted by grand churches, splendid mansions, marts, banks, museums, colleges, and galleries of art. Albeit was depravity ever more rife in any age or country than this? Greed, ambition, selfishness, sensuality, fraud, falsehood, and self-indulgence, these,—the elements of depravity and the fountains of crime,—abound in all directions. It is true they do not appear in their naked deformity, as in barbaric lands. Our civilization not only spreads a veil over them, but paints and decorates them, and thus conceals their native abhorrence. Still, though the devil robes himself in the garb of an angel, he is yet the devil. Poison is poison, however much you may flavour it.

II. That depravity UNDER THE MOST MAGNIFICENT FORM IS UTTERLY ABHORRENT TO THE GREAT GOD. "I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces." No veil can cover it from His eye; His glance pierces through all its decorations; to His view its ornamentations add to its hideousness. The same vices displayed in the hut of a savage chief, are more hideous to Him when developed in the gorgeous palaces of Christian sovereigns. "I abhor, the ex-

cellency (splendour) of Jacob." God has moral sensibility. He has not only a sensibility for the beautiful in form and the perfect in arrangement, but for the moral. He loves the true, the beautiful, and the good; He loathes the false, the selfish, and the corrupt. "Oh, do not this abominable thing, which I hate."

III. That depravity, which is ever abhorrent to God, MUST BRING RUIN ON ITS SUBJECTS. "Therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein." Observe, (1) The completeness of the ruin. "All that is therein"—utter destruction. (2) The certainty of the ruin. "The Lord God hath sworn by Himself."

CONCLUSION: What an argument does this subject furnish for national seriousness and investigation! The progress of civilization is not the true progress of humanity. A nation may advance in the arts, and go back in morals; may be robed in artistic beauty, and yet be loathsome in moral corruption. Heaven will not smile on a nation because it is externally grand, but only when it is internally good.

NO. XCIV.

Subject: TRYING THE IMPOSSIBLE.

"Shall horses run upon the rock? will one plough there with oxen?"—Amos vi. 12.

The folly of expecting real prosperity by committing acts of injustice or pursuing courses of sin, is here forcibly represented by comparing it to the

absurdity of attempting to run horses upon a rock, or to plough the rock with oxen. The strength of the representation is increased by its interrogative form. Our subject is, *trying the impossible*. Men are constantly doing this. Let us furnish a few examples.

I. When they ATTEMPT TO DESTROY AN ENEMY BY PHYSICAL FORCE. An individual has an enemy, a man who hates him with an inveterate antipathy. In order to overcome him, what does he do? He disables, or perhaps kills him. Or a nation has an enemy, strong and malignant. How does it seek to overcome it? In the same way, by brute force; swords, canons, bayonets, these are employed. Now the attempt to destroy an enemy by brute force is as absurd as to make horses run on the peaks of craggy rocks, or to put oxen to plough them. To destroy the enemy's body, is not to destroy either him or his enmity. Philosophy and the Bible teach that the body is not the man, it is his, not him. All the men that have fallen in duels, campaigns, or private assassinations, are living, thinking, acting still, and await their murderers in another state. No bullet or sword can touch the man. Men try to do the impossible,—

II. When they attempt to MAKE SOCIETY MORALLY GOOD BY MERE SECULAR INSTRUCTION. There are men who imagine that by teaching children the arts of reading, writing, ciphering, and the rudiments of science, they will improve the morality of the nation. When you remember that the moral character grows out of the heart and not out of the brain, out of the likings

and dislikings, not out of the ideas or intelligence, all this seems as absurd as the attempt to make horses run on rocks. Secular knowledge cannot change the heart, cannot alter a man's likes or dislikes. It may strengthen them, but not alter them. Dishonesty, uneducated, may commit petty thefts; but educated, it will legally swindle a nation. Knowledge, alas! is all in vain. Men try to do the impossible,—

III. When they attempt to GET HAPPINESS FROM WITHOUT. All mankind are in search of happiness. "Who will show us any good," this is the universal cry. The great bulk seek happiness from without, from what they can see, and taste, and hear, and handle. They look for happiness in the titillation of the nerves and the gratification of the senses. Now, were man nothing but body, this would do. This does for the brute and the bird. But man is spirit; and matter in no form or combination can satisfy spirit. A man's life, or happiness, consisteth not in the abundance of material things. True happiness springs from within, not from without; rises from holy loves, hopes, aspirations, and aims. In one word, love is the well of water that springs into everlasting life. Men try to do the impossible,—

IV. When they attempt to SAVE SOULS BY MINISTERING TO THEIR SELFISHNESS. There are men in all Churches who give themselves to saving souls, as they say. Salvation is the burden of all their thought and talk. But how do they endeavour to accomplish their object? By everlasting appeals

to the selfish fears and hopes of men. Tragic descriptions are given of hell, in order to frighten men, and sensuous descriptions of heaven, in order to attract them. But can this save the soul? Impossible. It will only aggravate its damnation. Salvation consists in the extinction of all that is selfish in human nature, and in the generating, fostering, and perfecting disinterested, self-oblivious love. "He that seeketh his life shall lose it: he that loseth his life shall find it." A preacher may increase his Church by appealing to the selfishness of his hearers, but he does not add one to the family of the good. The man who tries to save souls by constant appeals to the selfishness of human nature, acts more absurdly than he who attempts to gallop horses upon the sharp peaks of rugged rocks. Men try to do the impossible,—

V. When they attempt to CONVERT HEATHENS ABROAD BEFORE CONVERTING THE HEATHEN AT HOME. London abounds with heathens. All the heathens of the heathen world have their representatives in London; besides, the great bulk of the resident population are heathens, they are without God and without hope in the world. The influence of London upon the most distant parts of the world is a thousand times as great as that of all the missionaries from England and America. Under such circumstances, to send a few lonely men to distant peoples, ignorant of our language, modes of thought, and habits, with the idea of converting the world, is more absurd than to put horses to run on the rock, and oxen to

plough thereon. Are we not bound to go into all the world to spread the Gospel? Yes, but is there a greater world than London? and should not our sailors, our merchants, our travellers and emigrants be the missionaries to foreign lands? Whilst your missionaries carry teaspoonfuls of the Gospel here and there, your London pours out floods of depravity on every zone.*

CONCLUSION: Alas! How much human effort and sacrifice are lost for the want of practical wisdom and common sense! "Shall horses run upon the rock? will one plough there with oxen?" Yes, more successfully than we poor fools can accomplish some things that we labour to attain.

NO. XCV.

Subject: MAN'S PERVERTING POWER.

"For ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock."—Amos vi. 12.

The meaning of this is, that they had turned the best things into bad use. Judgment and righteousness, the laws of right, they had made as nauseous and noxious as "gall" and "hemlock." Our subject is *man's perverting power*. Our blessed Maker in our constitution has endowed us with a force which no other creature under heaven seems to have, of turning things to wrong uses and making those things which He intended to bless us the means of misery and ruin. You can see man

* See *Homilist*, Editor's Series, vol. vi., page 257.

working this power in many departments of action.

I. In PHYSICAL OPERATIONS. What does he do with the iron which he discovers in the depths of the earth? Forges it into implements of human destruction.

What does he do with the vineyards and the corn-fields? He turns them into inebriating liquids and rolls them like rivers of poison through every district of society. What does he do with his own physical appetites? Instead of attending to them as means of relief, he makes them a gratification, the chief sources of his pleasure, and thus degrades his mental and moral nature. Everywhere you see man perverting nature, perverting the metals, the rivers, the fruits, and the chemical elements of the world. This perverting power is seen—

II. In CIVIC LIFE. The principle of human government is a Divine ordinance, intended to secure equal justice and protection. But how has man perverted it! He has turned it into an instrument to benefit the few at the expense of the many, an instrument of tyranny and oppression. The principle of *judicature*, intended to secure for all a just administration of law, man notoriously perverts. Men are appointed to occupy the throne of judgment who are not always, or generally, known as incorruptibly just and morally pure. Hence often in the name of justice iniquities are enacted. Man's perversion of the law is proverbial as a hideous enormity. The principle of *merchandise*, intended to band man together by the

exchange of commodities in mutual obligation and fellowship, man has awfully perverted. He has made it the instrument of cupidity, monopoly, and nameless frauds. Thus, in every part of social life you see this perverting power in action—man turning "judgment into gall, and the fruits of righteousness into hemlock."

This perverting power is seen—

III. In THE RELIGIOUS SPHERE. In spiritual matters and in scenes that should be the most sacred, its action is perhaps more flagrant and formidable than anywhere else. Without going into the great world of heathenism, or even to remote parts of Christendom, look into our own religious England, and what do you see? You see the Gospel ministry, which is essentially self-denying, humble, devout, turned into an arrogant and plethoric priesthood. You see Gospel ceremonies, intended to adumbrate spiritual truths, employed as mystic channels of saving grace. You see a system of universal philanthropy made an instrument of miserable sectarianism and intolerable bigotry.

CONCLUSION: Do not let man say he has no power. His moral power is something stupendous. He has power to turn the things of God to the use of Satan, heavenly blessings into hellish curses. This he is doing everywhere. "Ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock."

Scientific Facts used as Symbols.

"Books of Illustration" designed to help preachers, are somewhat, we think, too abounding. They are often made up to a great extent of anecdotes from the sentimental side of life, and not always having a healthful influence or historic foundation. We find that preachers and hearers are getting tired of such. Albeit illustrations are needed by every speaker who would interest the people, and are sanctioned by the highest authority. Nature itself is a parable. Hence we have arranged with a naturalist who has been engaged in scientific investigation for many years, to supply the *Homilet* with such reliable and well-ascertained facts in nature, as cultured and conscientious men may use with confidence, as mirrors of morals and diagrams of doctrines.

Subject: The Rook,—Sympathy.

SYMPATHY for each other in suffering is not confined to mankind. There is one trait which is peculiar to the character of rooks, and which does them no little credit. It is the distress which they exhibit when one of them has been killed or wounded by a gun while they have been feeding in a field or flying over it. Instead of being scared away by the report of the gun, leaving their wounded or dead companion to his fate, they show the greatest anxiety or sympathy for him, uttering cries of distress and plainly proving that they wish to render him assistance by hovering over him, apparently to try and find out the reason why he did not follow them.

"While circling round and round,
They call their lifeless comrade from the ground."

If he is wounded, and can flutter along the ground, the rooks appear to animate him to make fresh exertions by incessant cries, flying a little distance before him, and calling to him to follow them.

The conduct of these rooks is a mighty rebuke to those of the human race,—and their name is legion,—who look with a callous eye and a heart of indifference upon their fellow-creatures who are the victims of violence and sore distress—the miserable Levites, who, instead of being attracted with practical commiseration to suffering man, pass by on the other side. Ye plethoric ecclesiastics, opulent merchants, haughty aristocrats, who in your mansions and palaces live from year to year

pursuing a course of self-indulgence, and never step forth to relieve any of the suffering thousands that lie groaning within the reach of your voice, go forth to the rooks, and learn wisdom !

Subject: The Hen,—A Self-complacent and Unimprovable Woman.

THE hen, reared in the confined strict notions of her class, never forgets for a moment the limits nor the duties of her station. Her sober mind abhors all innovation and extravagance. She will have nothing to do with those doubtful virtues which we proudly call elegance, refinement, high breeding, and which we at once sum up in the term polite education. The fantastical rockings, the buoyant rocking in mid air, the art of song and nest-building, which the world admires in other birds, are to her as naught. As her ancestors were before her, will she remain ; and like her dress, so in thought and deed, is she plain and citizen-like. "Stay at home and get an honest livelihood," is what she exclaims to her sons and daughters, amidst whom she walks with a high sense of her importance. She tells them of her own peaceful existence in her young days ; and flinging a precept to one and a caress to another, she nods her well-frizzled top-knot with discreet gravity.

The dear lady, full of maxims, prim notions, wise sayings, proverbs, and nursery lore, with her consequential self-satisfied mien, how often we have seen her ! We have heard her called in derision, "the dear old hen." But really, derision apart, there is some resemblance between this queen and that feathered one.

Subject ; The Goose,—Pampered Men.

THE wild goose is a pattern of sagacity. It must be content with the grasses, snails, fish, grain, berries, etc., which it finds in the open fields ; in short, with whatsoever niggard winter has left behind, and to travel from stream to

stream in quick flight, through darkness and frost. The domestic goose, on the contrary, living solely on potatoes and nourishing corn food, and transformed into a quiet household and pasturage animal, and having no work to do, has become the archetype of stupidity. With these animals, all depends on their activity: in slothful gluttony they lose their natural demeanour and energy: the flashing ardour of liberty and nature is extinguished in imbecility. The goose has become a slave to its appetite; but all that is tragical in such a situation is turned into comedy. The goose is a cavalry soldier on foot, a swimmer upon land. Not for one single moment does that heavy body, snatched from its native element, find its original equilibrium: its centre of gravity is lost. On broad oarlike feet she trails along her clumsy body, grown fat in captivity, at every step rocking on one side or half tumbling forwards; the neck alone is stretched out stiffly, and the eyes stare stupidly right before them. If you drive her, she never knows whither to go; now turning hesitatingly to the right and now to the left, always at a loss, always cackling. If you drive her more quickly, the noise becomes a shrill scream; the bewildered animal spreads out its wings, beats them violently together, without, however, rising an inch above the ground, for long disuse has weakened the strength of its pinions.

Probably in no class of society do you find such gross stupidity, dense ignorance, and ludicrous imbecility, as amongst people who pamper themselves—gluttons who feed their whims, ailments, and appetites until their mawkishness, obesity, and selfishness are revolting to the eye of common sense; and their servile prattle is offensive to all but idiot ears. It is almost too complimentary to compare these *self-indulgent* people to the goose; but the resemblance between the natural individual after years of pampering, and the goose before and after domestication, is very startling.

Subject: The Orinoco and Amazon,—Evil in Unexpected Places.

WHERE the shallow parts of the river disclose a sand-bank, the crocodile may be seen, with open jaws, and motionless as a rock, its uncouth body often covered with birds; while the chequered boa-constrictor, its tail lashed round the trunk of a tree, lies coiled in ambush near the bank, ready to dart with certain aim on its prey. Rapidly uncoiling, it stretches forth its body to seize the young bull, or some feebler prey as it fords the stream, and, moistening its victim with a viscid secretion, laboriously forces it down its dilating throat.

Let the lesson be learnt, that in this world there is no scene into which evil will not creep—no place where danger does not lurk. Evil is not limited to any locality or set of circumstances. Men sometimes think that if they could get away from the din and jargon of the city, and the tricks and snares of the market, they could discover some quiet, sacred glen, or lovely peaceful retreat, where baseness and depravity would not enter. Never was there a greater error. Of old the serpent found his way even into Paradise. Commerce and religion are two mighty streams whose civilizing influences are felt all the world over; yet, even in closest contiguity to their influences, what horrible forms of evil and grotesque shapes of barbarity are discernible! The physical world suffers like the moral world from the intrusion into its most beautiful associations of incongruous and detestable forms. Look at those two mighty rivers, the Orinoco and Amazon. Behold the forests which cover the region that divides them—forests the growth of thousands of years, grand and noble, almost sublime. What have we in this noble panorama, to mar the beauty, and to chill our joy!

Subject: Storks and Crows,—Mob Assemblages.

WHEN, in the height of summer, the meadows are parched and ponds and morasses are dried up, the stork resorts to the interior of the woods, with their glades, brooks, and

marshes; and when also, here, in the beginning of autumn, the inferior animals retire into their holes and winter abodes, he prepares for his migration to the south; and vast numbers collect together and cruise about in the air. At such times it happens that the storks hold a tribunal. It is a "right with might" like old military German custom, if not even according to the Lycurgus code. On a retired mead the long-shanked personages come together from all quarters: they fly round and round in large circles, making a loud clapping, for the matter in hand is a grave one. There are fifty or a hundred. At first they move hither and thither, groups are formed, much passionate clapping is going on, and all betokens the approach of a stormy debate. At length the parties close up and form a large imposing ring, in the centre of which, resigned to his fate, stands the victim. Single voices shrill and loud make themselves heard: it is the advocate for the prosecution, who brings forward the impeachment, and those charged with the defence, who fight the battle of the accused; whose sole crime consists in his weakness, and who, unable to bear the fatigues of the journey, it is now proposed to kill for his own and the people's good. The assembly frequently interrupts by its impetuosity the pathos of the speakers. At this moment another rises. He seems to make a declaration; and then the unfortunate wretch, pierced by the weapons of the assembly, succumbs to an early death. The rights of supremacy have been maintained; the multitude disperses, and there is now nothing more to prevent the departure of the caravan. In the northern parts of Scotland and in the Faroe Islands extraordinary meetings of crows are occasionally known to occur. They collect in great numbers as if they had all been summoned for the occasion; a few of the flock sit with drooping heads, and others seem as grave as judges, while others again are exceedingly active and noisy. In the course of about one hour they disperse; and it is not uncommon after they have flown away to find one or two left dead upon the spot. These meetings will sometimes continue for a day or two before the object, whatever it may be, is completed. Crows

continue to arrive from all quarters during the session. As soon as they have all arrived, a very general noise ensues, and shortly after, the whole fall upon one or two individuals and put them to death. When the execution has been performed they quietly disperse.

Truly those storks and crows typify assemblages of men, who, regardless of the interests of others, seek the exhibition of their own powers and the promotion of their own selfish ends. The mob demagogues, what care they for the weak ones in the assembly? All who will not abide by their decision and cheer their declamations shall be left like the weaker storks and crows, stunned, and all but dead on the ground.

Homiletical Breviaries.

No. CLX.

Subject: A CHRISTMAS-DAY MORNING MEDITATION.

"Come now, let us go to Bethlehem."—LUKE ii. 15.

I. Let us go to Bethlehem to WONDER: (a) At manhood latent in infancy. Great is the familiar mystery of growth. (β) At the Greatest of Men in obscure circumstances. The King of all lands, the Sovereign of the ages in a manger cradle. (γ) At "God manifest in the flesh." II. Let us go to Bethlehem to STUDY: (1) Lessons about Divine visions to men in common duties. Simple shepherds watching their flocks see what kings and prophets desired to see. (2) Lessons as to not despising small beginnings. There is the germ of Christianity. (3) Lessons as to the relation of Christ to childhood. (4) Lessons as to the relation of Christ to the poor. (a) Christ consecrated poverty. Here is a rebuke to pride, and a remonstrance to murmuring. (β) Christ a friend to the poor. III. Let us go to Bethlehem to BELIEVE: (1) God becomes human, in order that man may become divine. (2) Redeeming love knows no limits. IV. Let us come to Bethlehem to ADORE. God is love. "O come, let us worship and bow down."

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No. CLXI.

Subject: A KEY-NOTE FOR A NEW YEAR.

"This same Jesus."—Acts i. 11.

This angelic assurance gives us, I. A RESPONSE TO OUR CRY FOR WHAT IS PERMANENT. Baffled by change, bewildered by bereavements, shaken by losses, we look, as we gaze on Christ, on One who is changeless. "This same Jesus." II. A PLEDGE OF THE IDENTITY OF THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN WITH WHAT THEY WERE ON EARTH. The ascended Christ is not an altered Christ. And they are like Him, for they see Him as He is. III. THE PROCLAMATION OF AN AVAILABLE SAVIOUR FOR MEN. All through the centuries or the millenniums that elapse between His ascension and final advent He remains the same, and bears the same name, the name that signifies He shall save from sin. IV. THE PROMISE OF AN ABIDING FRIEND. He who was at Bethany and in Jericho what Christ was, is now (α) accessible, (β) kind, (γ) all-sufficient. V. THE PROPHECY OF A SURE SOVEREIGNTY. For ever and everywhere, what is dear to Him now, will continue to be dear; and what is hated will be hated.

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No. CLXII.

Subject: TRUE MORAL SONSHIP.

"If a son, then an heir of God through Christ."—GAL. iv. 7.

Men sustain the relation of sons to their parents in two senses, *natural* and *moral*. Many are sons in the former sense, that is, they are the begotten of their parents, who are not sons in the latter sense, that is, they have not the true spirit of the relationship. Many a father can say truly of his sons, They are my offspring, but I can scarcely call them sons: they have no love or reverence for me, they are moral aliens. All men are God's sons in the former sense, they are His offspring. But in the moral sense they are aliens and enemies. He only regards those of the human family as sons who have the spirit of sons, the true spirit of the relationship—filial loyalty and devotion. This is the sonship referred to in the text. Two remarks are suggested: I. This true moral sonship ENTITLES MAN TO A DIVINE INHERITANCE. "An heir of God"—what an heirship is this! First: It is *independent of death*. Mere earthly heirships are controlled by death. The

death of the father is necessary in order to give possession to the heir; and the death of the heir, too, will of course deprive him of the inheritance. But here is an heirship independent of death. The Eternal Proprietor never dies; and the mortality of the heir will only put him in more complete possession of the inheritance. In truth, the inheritance is in the filial disposition itself, and herein is the paradise. Secondly: It is *absolutely untransferable*. Earthly inheritances are only held through life, they pass from hand to hand; but the inheritance of the moral son of God cannot be transmitted. It is inalienable, it is in the soul, in the immeasurable regions of thought, and love, and hope, and imagination. Thirdly: It is *incommensurably great*. Earthly inheritances you can measure by roods, or acres, or miles; but the inheritance of moral sonship is wider than the universe, vast as immensity, infinite as God. "The Lord is my portion." II. This true moral sonship COMES TO MAN THROUGH ONE ILLUSTRIOUS PERSONAGE. "An heir of God through Christ." There is One Being in the universe, and only One, who makes the man offspring the true son of God, i.e., who generates in him supreme love and reverence for the Great Father. The production of this in the heart is represented in the Bible under various terms, as repentance, conversion, regeneration, creation, adoption, etc., etc. And this is the work of Christ by His Gospel and His Spirit. Historically, no one else ever *has* done it; philosophically, no one else ever *can* do it. This moral sonship evermore implies moral resemblance and mutual affection.

NO. CLXIII.

Subject: SOUL PLANTING.

"Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God."—PSALM xcii. 13.

All false methods of education are founded upon wrong ideas of the soul, the thing to be educated. Sometimes the soul is spoken of as a vessel in which to put a certain amount of knowledge, sometimes as a soil to cultivate, sometimes as a stone to polish. The best material representation of the soul is a seed. It contains in itself all that it ever will be, and requires for its development powers to produce germination and foster growth. The text suggests two thoughts concerning true soul planting. I. THE SOIL WHICH IT REQUIRES. "The house of the

Lord." "The courts of our God." This means condensedly the *redemptive* religion of God; or, in other words, the Gospel. Nothing but the Gospel has the power to quicken, nurture, and fully develop the human soul as it is found in its corrupt state. Science, philosophy, poetry, social ethics, and all the arts and influences of civilization have tried and failed. No seed can grow without the proper soil; the soul cannot grow unless it is put into the soil of redemptive truth. You may as well expect that an acorn would grow to a perfect oak planted in the sand, as to expect that the soul will grow to its proper proportions if planted in any soil but the Gospel. II. The PROSPERITY WHICH IT WILL REALIZE. "Shall flourish." Who shall tell to what grand intellectual and moral dimensions a human soul will grow in the course of ages, that has been truly planted in the Gospel? What have Moses, David, Isaiah, Paul, John, become already? They "shall flourish." Flourish in *size*, multiplying their branches of power, and towering higher and higher. Flourish in *strength*. Ever receiving more vitality and vigour. Flourish in *beauty*. More majestic in figure, more exquisite in hue, more charming in flower. Flourish in *fruitfulness*. Clusters increasing with every age. "They shall flourish." How glorious the soul may become!

No. CLXIV.

Subject: CHRIST'S ESTIMATE OF HIMSELF.

"Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God," etc.—*PHIL. ii. 5-9.*

I. CHRIST'S ESTIMATE OF HIMSELF. He "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." We look at a man's estimate of anything through his character. The estimate of a man of little character is worth proportionally little; the estimate of a man of known moral worth is worth much. Christ's character was declared to be sinless by heaven and earth and hell. "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." "I find no fault in Him." "I have betrayed innocent blood." "We know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God." This Sinless One's estimate of Himself must be correct, "He thought it not robbery," etc. II. The EFFECT of Christ's estimate of Himself upon His CONDUCT. "He made Himself of no reputation," etc. The consciousness of possessing qualifications of an uncommon

order, whether physical, mental, or moral, has led many men to perform deeds of the noblest self-sacrifice. Christ was conscious of a Divine nature, of an uncreated life, the only nature that could fully reveal God to man, the only life that could make an atonement for sin. Therefore He humbled Himself to the death of the cross. III. Christ's estimate of Himself, and the conduct which sprang out of it, HAS BEEN CONFIRMED AND APPROVED BY THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY. "Whersfore God also hath highly exalted Him," etc.

W. HARRIS.

No. CLXV.

Subject: SOUL DESPOTISM.

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"—ROM. vii. 24.

I. The soul's OPPRESSIVE DESPOT. "The body of this death;" or, as in margin, this body of death! What is meant by this? Corrupt animalism. What is elsewhere called the flesh with its corruptions and lusts. Somehow or other the body, intended to be an instrument and servant of the soul, has become its sovereign and keeps all its power of intellect and conscience in utter subjection. We must not disguise the fact that the body—corrupt animalism—is the moral monarch of the world. Animalism rules in literature, in politics, in science, and even in churches. The soul is the servant of the senses. This despot is death. Paul calls it "this body of death." It is death to all true freedom, progress, happiness. Observe, II. The soul's STRUGGLE TO BE FREE. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" The soul's struggle for freedom, implies First: *A quickened consciousness of its condition.* "O wretched man that I am!" The vast majority of souls, alas! are utterly insensible as to their wretched condition; hence they remain passive. They are asleep. What quickens the soul into this consciousness? Paul himself answers the question in this chapter. "The law of the Lord came." The light of God's moral law flashes on the conscience and startles it. Secondly: *An earnest desire for help.* "Who shall deliver me?" It feels its utter inability to haul the despot down; and it cries mightily for help, "Who shall deliver me?" Who? Legislatures, moralists, poets, philosophers, priesthoods? No; they have tried for ages, and have failed. Who? There is One and but One, and to Him Paul alludes in the next verse and the following chapter. "Thanks be to God," etc., etc.

The Chief Founders of the Chief Faiths.

Around no men, amongst all the millions of mankind, does so much interest gather as around the Founders of the Chief Religious Faiths of the world. Such men are sometimes almost lost in the obscurity of remote ages, or of the mystery with which they surrounded themselves or their early followers invested them. But whenever they can be discerned, their characters analysed, and their deeper experiences understood, they are found to be, not only leaders and masters of the multitudes who have adopted more or less of their creed and ritual, but also interpreters (more or less partial) of the universal yearnings of the soul of man. Such men may have seemed to sit at the fountains of human thought and feeling, and to have directed or have coloured the mysterious streams; but they have quite as often indicated in their doctrines and in their deeds the strong courses of the thoughts and feelings which are more permanent and deeper than any one man or even any one age could completely discover. The aim of these papers will be, with necessary brevity, to review the chief of such men, noting suggestively rather than exhaustively, their biography, their *circumstances*, their *theology*, and their *ethics*. And in concluding the series, it is proposed to compare and to contrast each and all of them with the "One Man whom in the long roll of ages we can love without disappointment and worship without idolatry, the Man Christ Jesus."

PRINCIPAL BOOKS OF REFERENCE.—Max Müller's "History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature," "The Science of Language," "Chips from a German Workshop;" Rev. F. D. Maurice's "Religions of the World;" Archdeacon Hardwick's "Christ and other Masters;" Rev. J. W. Gardner's "Faiths of the World;" Miss Mary Carpenter's "Last Days of Rammohun Roy;" Rev. F. W. Farrar's "Witness of History to Christ;" Rev. A. W. Williamson's "Journey in North China;" Canon Liddon's Bampton Lecture on "Our Lord's Divinity;" Cousin's "History of Modern Philosophy;" S. Clarke's "Ten Great Religions;" Father Hue's "Christianity in China;" Carlyle's "Heroes and Hero-Worship."

SECOND SERIES.

No. II.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND CONFUCIUS.

HAVING already noted the circumstances that surrounded the great Chinese Sage, and the salient points in his biography and his teachings, our business in this paper is to suggest comparisons and contrasts that connect him and the Lord Jesus Christ in the thoughts of those who seek to have a comparative view of the religions of the world. And in doing so we observe:

I. Our Lord Jesus Christ CLAIMS TO BE INFINITELY MORE THAN CONFUCIUS CLAIMS. The followers of Confucius have indeed deified him. Sixteen hundred temples are erected to his memory, and annual festivals and crowds of altars are sacred to him.

But he distinctly called himself "a transmitter, not a maker," and said he had premonition of some one greater than himself who was to come after him. Moreover Confucius is only a name out of China, his religion is indigenous to the area within the walls of the Celestial Empire. In contradistinction to this, Jesus Christ (α) claimed to be a King; (β) claimed to be Divine in origin; and in authority, (γ) claimed universal dominion. And for verification of these claims, we have but to turn to the records of His incarnate life and the annals of the missionary propaganda which have carried His influence to every shore and caused His name and teaching to be uttered in every language.

Then passing from the suggestion of striking contrasts between the Chinese Sage and the Saviour of the world, we proceed to notice, that in the great truth which was at the root of Confucianism, and which, in spite of errors, has kept it alive as long as it has lived, that system is transcended by Christianity. As we have seen, Confucius thought he saw the cause of all national decline and of all human misery in disorder, and reversely, the hope for the nation and for the individual in order. Because they were for the cultivation of orderliness, he cared for the schools and mourned their decay: because they promulgated that orderliness, he studied and enjoined the study of the sacred books. Family life was to be cherished because it was friendly to orderliness; office in the State was an object of ambition because it could be used for this ideal orderliness. Now, in comparing Confucius with the Saviour of the world in this very direction, we notice,—

II. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST MEETS THE CRAVING FOR ORDER WHICH CONFUCIUS UTTERS. And in doing so, (1) He reveals as its *standard* the will of a personal God, not a habit of the past or a mere custom of government. To all that is good in Confucianism Jesus Christ adds, as of inexpressible moral worth to man, all the motives of enthusiasm, all the hopes and the faith in help that they may have who seek to conform their life to a certain ideal, because they say of the Heavenly King, "It is the will of my Father." To teach men truly to

call God "Father," is in truth the end of Christ's mission. (2) He shows its *perfection* is in heaven, not in any golden age that is gone. From Jesus we learn not to reproduce an only virtue, but to bring down a heavenly one. The inner order, the true harmony of life we want does exist now. Goodness is not an imitation but an inspiration. "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." As closely connected with this, we notice (3) He does not *limit human hope* to the present world, but illumines our future as the possible sphere for reaching our highest ideals. Whilst Confucianism sets no value on individual human life, so that suicide is weirdly common; whilst its *national* life is fired with no expectation, and so there is atrophy instead of progress, the Lord Jesus Christ teaches those who have best learned of Him to value as of peerless worth the present as a possible preparation for a sublime future. He has taught us that Eternity is the harvest of time. (4) He proves that there is a *Law*, by obeying which, complete order can be restored to human nature. Confucius was a cry for order. Christ was the gift of peace; He brings in the order of true relationship between men who have sinned and a God who will forgive. He is the exemplar in His own life of inner order and harmony that circumstances could not shake, that the devil could not destroy. Loving obedience to His Father's will was evermore a fountain of peace to Him. And He is not only a pattern to men who would have peace, but an inspirer; for He says, "My peace give I unto you."

URIAH R. THOMAS.

Bristol.

PRAYER.—"Ejaculations take not up any room in the soul. They give liberty of callings so that at the same instant one may follow his proper vocation. The husbandman may dart forth an ejaculation and not make a balk the more; the seaman nevertheless steers his ship right in the darkest night; yea the soldier at the same time may shoot his prayer to God and aim his pistol at his enemy, the one better hitting the mark for the other."—FULLER.

The Preacher's Scrap Room.

SHORT ESSAYS.

Subject: Innocence not always bold.

THERE exists a beautiful theory, that the inward consciousness of rectitude so impresses itself upon a man's outward demeanour, that his innocence (if he be innocent) of any charge of moral delinquency which has been alleged against him may be pretty correctly inferred from his bearing. And, doubtless, with the highest natures, this is so. "The righteous," say the Scriptures, "are bold as a lion"; which term "righteous" can, in its strict sense, refer only to those persons who not merely seek in all things God's approval, but are abundantly satisfied if they win it, and whose joy in the possession thereof is such, that men, looking upon them, behold the clouds of obloquy which encircle their fair fame all aglow with the radiance of the blessedness that God's grace hath imparted to their souls.

But, with the average human being, the case is often very different. For, 1st: if a man has a morbid or undue regard for the opinions of others, values his reputation almost as he does his honour,—a common circumstance,—and possesses, moreover, an active fancy which enables him to place himself in the position of his censors,—a common quality,—the very suspicion of people, even if it be unwarranted by the fact, will cause him to display a dejection which those who believe in the theory alluded to above, would account demonstrative of his guilt. And, 2ndly: assuming the man to have this morbid or undue regard for the opinions of others, and to possess, moreover, this active fancy, he will exhibit the more dejection under suspicion, and will thus the more seem to be guilty, the less morally capable he is of being so; because, the more foreign to his nature is the moral delinquency imputed to him, the greater will be his detestation of the

thing, and thus the deeper his dismay at being considered likely to commit it.

A third quality which would favour the suspicion of guilt, but which is perfectly compatible with innocence, if not, indeed, presumptive proof of it,—for vice soon acquires a brazen front,—is modesty, one characteristic of which is, as Mr. Patmore expresses it,—

“Not to unveil before the gaze
Of an imperfect sympathy
In aught we are.”

Thus: the modest man is “all things to all men,” in this sense, that from those who do not understand or appreciate him, he shields himself in a cloak of impenetrable reserve, while to congenial natures he will be unconstrained and communicative. Hence, such a man will acquire various reputations—his virtues of brain and of heart being acknowledged by, because apparent to, only those who themselves possess similar qualities; and hence such an one, if suspected, though wrongly, of misconduct, will, for fear of being repulsed, manifest towards those who deem him culpable just that nervous shrinking which they would be likely to account additional evidence of his guilt.

THORNTON WELLS.

EFFICACY OF PRAYER.—“There is something in the very act of prayer that for a time stills the violence of passion, and elevates and purifies the affections. When affliction presses hard, and the weakness of human nature looks around in vain for support, how natural is the impulse that throws us on our knees before Him who has laid His chastening hand upon us! and how encouraging the hope that accompanies our supplications for His pity! We believe that He who made us cannot be unmoved by the sufferings of His children; and in sincerely asking His compassion we almost feel that we receive it.”—JEREMY TAYLOR.

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

MUSIC.—Music is not happiness, it is only its symbol: music is the natural language of happiness: joy runs into song, as sap runs into foliage and blossom.

WORSHIP.—Whilst our religion should be as settled as the trunk of the oak, the forms and spirit of our devotion should be as changing as the foliage, now green with spring, now tinted with summer, now tinged with the brown hues of autumn.

CHRIST KNOWS WHAT IS IN MAN.—The magnificent edifice amid whose halls, chambers, offices, corridors, and courts we lose ourselves, is thoroughly understood by him who drew the plan: in the brain of the architect the whole existed in archetype before the foundation stone was laid. The piece of intricate machinery, with its complication of wheels, springs, levers, convolutionary movements, fills us with perplexity; but the machinist who constructed it knows every post and pin. It is even so with mind: the profoundest metaphysician understands it not, and hence the numerous and conflicting theories. But Christ the Architect knows it well. There are wonderful things in man, indefinite powers of action, innumerable germs of life, unsealed fountains of fathomless sympathies, unnumbered tribes of thought and streams of emotion, both good and evil—yet all are known to Christ.

DENOMINATIONALISM.—Oh haste the time when Christianity shall be identified neither with Church nor Dissent, but wrought out in all the engagements and institutions of common life. The Gospel of Christ is as independent of both as the sun of heaven is independent of the flickering gas-lights in the streets.

MYSTERY.—It is, I confess, the mystery that overhangs every part of nature that gives to me its charms, and awakens within me the sentiments of wonder and worship. Thank God! nature swims on the billow, and is canopied with the sky of mystery. As the little rill, a thousand leagues from the great ocean, rolls towards the boundless, so the human mind tends to the mysterious; and the mysterious is God.

HUMAN WORDS.—Human words, how changeable they are! Many of them represent different things in different ages, and they seldom if ever represent exactly the same thing to different minds, even in the same age: to trust to them, therefore, is to build on sand. But when we believe in Christ, we trust in that which is immutable: "The same yesterday to-day, and for ever." Human propositions are shifting as the clouds; but Christ alone is the true creed for humanity.

FOREIGN MISSIONS.—We must convert the conventional Church before we can spiritually convert the heathen. "Unless," said the Archbishop of Canter-

bury,* "we take some steps for converting the heathen, the heathen will be converting us." What steps shall be taken?—the calling of "Church congresses," to consider the desirability of effecting alterations in the Prayer-Book, such as the modification of some creeds, the expunging of others, and the creation of new ones?—or to consider whether the Priest shall turn eastward or westward, bow to this or that, wear white cotton or black silk in his public ministrations?—or to contrive how best to perpetuate and strengthen the golden chain that binds the Church to civil patronage?—or to adopt the best plan for obtaining funds to increase the number of ecclesiastical edifices? All this I solemnly believe is but a childish trifling with spiritual realities. Such work to me would seem as senseless and as futile as the attempt to restore a dead tree in a forest by tying green branches to its trunk or painting it with the hues of life. The steps to be taken, I venture

to suggest to the Lord Primate of all England, are efforts to promote the quickening of all into a new spiritual life. For many reasons it would be easier to convert London than any other city of the world; and when converted, what an evangelist would it become! London is a fountain of influence, whose streams meander through all the institutions, cities, towns, villages, mansions, and hovels of the civilized world. It is madness to suppose you can win victories in the battle on foreign shores, if you have not London on your side. We must be Christians before we can make Christians. Christliness of life can alone convert the world. There is no other light will scatter heathen darkness, no other heat that will thaw the icy heart of universal man into the crystal streams of grace and truth.

GOODNESS—falling on ungrateful hearts, is like strains of music on deaf ears or streams of light on sightless eyes; it yields no thrill of pleasure.

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

SERMONS PREACHED IN ST. JAMES'S CHAPEL. SECOND SERIES. By Rev. STOFFORD A. BROOK, M.A. London: Henry King & Co., 65, Cornhill.

This volume contains twenty-five sermons, most of which are on the most vital subjects. They are not sermons in the ordinary sense: they belong to a higher class of thought and expression. Were they to be

* See *The Times*, August 20, 1872.

delivered in the most thronged church or chapel in London, they would in the course of a few Sundays clear away, at least, eighty per cent. of the usual attendants. The stiffly orthodox in creed, the narrow in sentiment, the fleshly, the unthoughtful, and the credly would all leave their pews for others: The remainder, however, would be men worth preaching to, because they would rightly receive and nobly reflect the great soul-quickening and elevating thoughts which beat and bound in every paragraph. On Christmas Day we went to St. James's Chapel in order to hear the author of these sermons. We had read his *Life of Robertson*, as well as some of his sermons before, and we expected to see a man with brow and breast far above the average. We were not disappointed: we saw a majestic head and a manly chest, and heard thoughts that did us good. We expected also to see a small congregation, for where throughout London or England do you find a great thinker in the pulpit attracting a large congregation? Not in this either were we disappointed. The chapel, perhaps, would hold six hundred people, and it was not more than two thirds filled. What of that? It was truly a great congregation. It was evidently made up of men and women, not only of the higher class in social life, but of the higher types of intellect, heart, and culture. They were profoundly and devoutly attentive.

We recommend this volume to our clerical readers. These sermons will quicken their mental circulation, and lift them into a new region of thought.

HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN RELIGION AND SCIENCE. By J. WILLIAM DRAFER, M.D., LL.D. London: Henry King & Co., 65, Cornhill.

Those who have read the author's *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe* (and most of our readers probably have done so), will expect to find in these pages deep philosophic thinking, great catholicity of sentiment, much striking thought and forceful expression. In all this they will not be disappointed, although, perhaps, they will find much that will strike hard against their traditional beliefs. The book consists of twelve chapters, the subjects of which are, "The Origin of Science; The Origin of Christianity,—its Transformation upon attaining Imperial Power,—its Relation to Science; Conflict concerning the Doctrine of the Unity of God; The Restoration of Science in the South; Conflict respecting the Nature of the Soul; Doctrine of Emanation and Absorption; Conflict respecting the Nature of the World; Controversy respecting the Age of the Earth; Conflict respecting the Criterion of Truth; Controversy respecting the Government of the Universe; Latin Christianity in Relation to Modern Civilization; Science in Relation to Modern Civilization; The Impending Crisis." Every chapter is fraught with rare and useful information, and reveals great research, high spirit, and dashing energy of thought.

THE SUNDAY MAGAZINE FOR 1874. Edited by W. G. BLAIKIE, D.D., LL.D. London: Isbister & Co., 56, Ludgate Hill.

It was fortunate for the *Sunday Magazine* that Dr. Blaikie was at hand, and disposed to take the editorial pen death had snatched from the hand of the noble-hearted and brilliant Dr. Guthrie. This volume is equal to any of its predecessors, and in some respects, we think, superior. The articles by the Dean of Chester, Dr. Kerr, Professor Plumptre, Canon Perowne, Dr. Alexander, Canon Lyttelton, Dr. Fraser, we have read with great interest, and are specially valuable.

We trust that its circulation, not only keeps up, but increases.

A VIEW OF THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL, ZECHARIAH, AND THE REVELATION. By M. E. H. London: William Macintosh, 24, Paternoster Row.

"The object of this book," says the Author, "is to draw attention to coming events, the events that will take place during the last seven years of this dispensation, to the last three years and a half of which our attention is especially drawn by God in His Word."

We scarcely know what to say about this book. It contains much that is valuable, with many things that are unfounded and visionary. When men go to Daniel, Zechariah, and Revelation, in order to speculate about times and seasons, rather than to ascertain the great moral truths necessary for man to learn and practise everywhere and for ever, they leave the field of useful labour, and enter the region of haziness in order to do the Quixotic.

THE ENGLISHMAN. Edited by Dr. KENNEDY, Q.C., 10 parts. Published at 63, Fleet Street.

Ten parts, or forty numbers, of this Journal have been sent us, we suppose, for notice in the *Homilist*. Although we might excuse ourselves from noticing it, on the ground that it has not much to do either with theology or homiletics, we hail the opportunity of again calling the attention of our readers to it. On its first appearance we gave it a hearty welcome. We have been subscribers from the commencement, and every week look more anxiously forward to its advent than to any other journal that enters our library. It has life in it—the life of conviction, conscience, moral passion; and this, apart from its affluent and varied intelligence, Junius-like writing, and its special objects, give it a charm for us which no other journal possesses. We have heard a number of objections to the journal. Some say it is brimful of egotism. Well, we think perhaps there is occasionally too much of what seems self-parade. But then circumstances often occur in the lives of great men when reference to self is not only just but obligatory and indispensable. The greatest man that ever trod this earth expressed a wish to be heard in order (to use his own language) that "I may boast myself a little." When a man's sense of justice is outraged, when his conduct

is misinterpreted and misrepresented, when he feels himself victimised by the selfishness, cunning, and envy of dastardly competitors, duty to self compels him to stand up for his own vindication and defence. The cold slimy snail pulls in his horns when his shell is merely touched, but insulted lions roar out their natures and make themselves felt. Others say it is redolent with wrath: the paragraphs are red-hot with indignation. There is an amiability that is execrable, there is an indignation that is praiseworthy. The more love (the divinest element of our nature) a man has in him, the more susceptible of rage. Moses, David, Paul, often went into flame. To hate an oppressor is maintained by Buckle "to be an instinct of our nature against which he who struggles does so to his own detriment." On the occasion of Macaulay's death, some of the miserable little scribbling critics of the day said that the brilliant essayist and historian had no heart. Thackeray denied the charge, and declared that the distinguished author had a heart sensibly beating through every page he penned, so that he seemed to be always in a storm of revolt against wrong, craft, tyranny. For ourselves, we have no faith in the man who is incapable of indignation, when justice is outraged and gross immoralities revel around him.

We are right glad to find that Dr. Kenealy is improving in health and growing in popularity. We believe that, notwithstanding the alarming moral corruption that abounds in our country, there are, down deep in the heart of the bulk of the people, those eternal sentiments of justice and truth that only require some man or men to kindle, evolve, interpret, and enforce, in order to work out a national regeneration. We have not the honour of a personal acquaintance with Dr. Kenealy, nor have we ever seen him in the flesh; albeit, judging from his noble conduct and masterly speeches in the Tichborne trial and the productions of his pen now before us, in all candour we know of no man, at this moment, more competent for the work than Dr. Kenealy. Heaven prosper him! and may he soon find his way into St. Stephen's as the forerunner of many who share his ethical convictions and patriotic aims!

MESMERISM, AND ITS HEALING POWER. By PROFESSOR ADOLPHE DIDIER.
London: Bailliere, Tindall & Cox, King William Street.

It is now many years since we were convinced of the power and reality of mesmerism; and we are glad to have this little work put in our hands, which contains numerous instances of its healing virtue. If men, contrary to their will and without contact or touch, can impart their diseases, there can be nothing unreasonable in the doctrine that by the force of their will, contact, and rubbing they can transfuse some amount of their vitality, energy, and health. The medical profession does itself no honour either by scoffing at or ignoring mesmeric facts.



A DISCOURSE

ON

Canon Kingsley.

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."—
COR. xvi. 13.

BEFORE we furnish our readers with the substance of a sermon preached at Westminster Abbey, we give, from one of the leading organs of the day, the following able sketch of Canon Kingsley's life.

It is with sincere regret that all English readers of this age will have heard of the death of one of the most vigorous and accomplished of modern authors. Charles Kingsley, after several weeks' illness, breathed his last on Saturday, at the parsonage of Eversley, in Hampshire, his abode during thirty years. He was fifty-five years of age, and his literary fame is of twenty-five years' standing, though he was highly esteemed before that time, within a small circle, as an energetic and original writer, both of verse and prose.

His life was not outwardly eventful, though he was of an adventurous disposition. The quiet profession of a country clergyman, promoted to a brief University pro-

fessorship and to the Canon's stall in Chester Cathedral, which he exchanged for a seat in Westminster Chapter, restrained his chivalrous impulses towards a career of personal activity. Like Frederick Robertson of Brighton, whom in some features of character he much resembled, Charles Kingsley was made by nature for a dashing, high-spirited, gallant British soldier. The warfare, however, in which he engaged was moral and spiritual, though less directly evangelical than that of the Brighton preacher. What Kingsley ever sought to do for the enforcement of Christian ideas, was rather to display their most attractive combination with the liberal principles and sentiments of this age, with all the graces of art, cultivated taste, and true social refinement, and with the study of all the wonders and beauties in nature. He also recommended, as most consistent with the highest aims of life, habits of healthy exercise and cheerful recreation. The gospel he taught, was one of "a sound mind in a sound body." He was earnestly desirous, therefore, to claim for the poorest of the labouring classes their full share in all the opportunities of culture that lie in the opulent civilization of the present age. This made him, in the earlier part of his career, an enthusiastic apostle of Socialism and Democracy, qualified, as in the creed of Lamennais, by the religious doctrines of Christendom.

To this period and its prevailing influences belong the first notable writings of Charles Kingsley. A fragment of a story, entitled "Yeast," was anonymously published in *Fraser's Magazine*. It purported to show the ferment of conflicting opinions and passions in the mind of a young English gentleman of that day, who had freed himself from conventional and traditional habits of thought. The story broke off with his condescending to serve as a street porter at the bidding of a mysterious stranger, while solacing his intellectual pride with the stoic philosophy of Car-

lyle. There was a good deal of declamation against game-preserving squires, and some apology for poachers; but the effect was more exciting than satisfying. In "Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet," which came a year or two later, with Mr. Kingsley's name to it, he drew a striking portrait of the mental condition of sensitive and meditative youth among the working classes likely to be leaders of the Chartist movement.

The topics of that day have expired, or have been superseded by other social problems, in our own time. Charles Kingsley did not stand still, but soon passed on to a wider range of studies and moral interests. His attention was caught by a fancied analogy between the general corruption of society in the decline of the Roman Empire, when the ancient religious customs and philosophies of the classical period were proved effete, and the present condition of Europe. "Hypatia; or, New Foes with an old Face," is an historical romance designed to illustrate this comparison, the scene being laid at Alexandria in the fourth century. The heroine, whose story may be read in Gibbon, was a lady lecturer of the Neoplatonist school, who fell a victim to the fanatical rage of the mob, when their heathen instincts prevailed in spite of a misdirected Christian authority. As a tale, we should say, "Hypatia" is one of the author's finest works of imagination. Only the "Romola" of George Eliot can be ranked with it in the same class of fictions. The dramatic force, the vivid conceptions of character and moral experience, the healthy spirit of duty and robust piety, which distinguish Mr. Kingsley's best stories, with his animated style of description and narrative, are scarcely excelled by any other novelist.

A more direct attempt was made by him, in "Two Years Ago," to represent the characteristics, as he viewed them, of the nineteenth century. The typical hero is

Tom Thurnall, a returned gold-digger from Australia, clever, enterprising, self-reliant, and unbelieving, till he is converted to religion by the example of a pure-minded and devout English maiden, Grace Harvey, who finally becomes his wife.

Mr. Kingsley about this time dwelt fondly upon the shores of North Devon and the haunts of red deer of Exmoor. Devonshire, indeed, was his native county; but it was on the borders of Dartmoor, at Holne, near Ashburton, that he was born, in 1819. His affection, however, for the local associations with English history came out in "*Westward Ho*," a stirring tale of the Elizabethan sea-rovers and sea-fighters of Raleigh and Grenville, of Drake, Hawkins, and Frobisher, of the Golden Americas and the Spanish Armada. This story will keep its place in the favour of English readers longer than anything else he has written. Next to it, probably, in choice and treatment of an historical subject, is "*Hereward the Wake*," a tale of the stubborn struggle maintained by the Saxons in the Fen Country against their Norman Conqueror. Whether as an interesting romance, a study of character, or a picture of national history, it is very superior to Lord Lytton's "*Harold*," and equal to Sir Walter Scott's tales in every quality but humour. Kingsley, it must be confessed, is deficient in that quality.

We have mentioned only his principal works of fiction. A large amount of other writing,—descriptive sketches, critical and historical essays, lectures and sermons, fairy tales, allegories or parables for the instruction of young people, and pleasing discussions of natural history or popular science,—issued from his pen. He was a geologist, a botanist, a zoologist, and an eager sportsman; and the brightest of word-painters for landscape. His book of West Indian descriptions, entitled "*At Last*," was happily occasioned by the late gratification of a life-long

desire to see the forests of a tropical region. "The Water Babies" would be a charming tale for children, if it were not a satire on their elders. Poetry, too, in different forms of verse, from "The Saint's Tragedy" of German Elizabeth, to many a graceful and tender little song, proceeded from this fertile mind. It is to be hoped that a collective edition of his works may soon be prepared.

The lamented subject of this memoir was a son of the Rev. Charles Kingsley, some time Rector of Chelsea. He was educated at King's College, London, and at Magdalen College, Cambridge. He married a daughter of the late Mr. Pascoe Grenfell, M.P. The only parochial charge he ever held as a clergyman, was at the village of Eversley; but he held the canonry at Chester from 1869 till his recent appointment in Westminster Abbey. He was also one of the Queen's Chaplains. In 1860, he took the Professorship of Modern History in the University of Cambridge, but gave it up some years afterwards, confessing his disinclination to that line of study.

The following is the sermon delivered in Westminster Abbey.

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."

It was once remarked by a venerable and saintly person, that one of the most striking characteristics of the Psalms of David, was their free, unrestrained appreciation of what we call nature, whether in the moral or the physical world; that they began with commending the honest, upright man—"the noblest work of God"—and they ended by calling on every creature, animate or inanimate, to praise the Eternal. This sympathy with the natural man and the natural creation was the more remarkable in the Psalter, because of all the sacred books of the Old Testament it was the one which was confessedly the most spiritual, the most intimate in its communion with the Divine. And they learned from that, as from many

like characteristics of the Bible, that the modern distinction, drawn from the Middle Ages downwards between nature and grace, between the secular and the spiritual, between the Church and the world, however difficult it might be altogether to avoid such phrases, was no essential part of the Christian religion, and in no way corresponded to the opposition drawn in the Scriptures between the flesh and the spirit, between the holy and the unholy—that it was the product of an artificial condition, whether of barbarous or civilized society, which had stunted rather than forwarded the upward growth of the spirit of man towards its Divine original. To these artificial separations the mass of mankind readily accommodated themselves. It was more easy for the worldly to be entirely worldly, and for the religious to be exclusively religious, each in an isolated mediocrity, whether we call it golden or leaden, which tended to produce a false standard of religion and a low estimate of the world in which our duties were cast. It was for this reason that they ought to prize as among God's best gifts, any characters, any phenomena that broke through this commonplace level, and which, like mountain crags, countersected and united the ordinary divisions of mankind, or, like volcanoes, burst forth at times and revealed to them something of the central fires within and underneath the crust of custom, fashion, and tradition. Such were those whom they sometimes saw, who appeared to cynical critics or to superstitious formalists to have chosen a mistaken position in life, apparently alien to the bent of their inclinations or their antecedents—a religious man, for example, becoming a lawyer or a statesman, or a bold, gallant youth, born to be a sailor or a soldier, led by circumstances into the career of a clergyman. Such, also, were those in whom the inborn flame of genius illuminated, and perhaps shattered, the earthly vessel that

contained it, and, despite of all surrounding obstacles, claimed affinity with kindred sparks of light and warmth wherever they existed. We all know what and who it is that has suggested these thoughts. In that multiplied shadow of sorrow and death which has for the last few months or weeks enlarged its borders beyond usual precedent throughout the land, one brilliant light which shone in our dim atmosphere has been suddenly extinguished; and it cannot be allowed thus to pass away without our asking ourselves what we may have gained by its presence amongst us, what we have lost by its disappearance. Others have spoken, and will long speak, on both sides of the Atlantic, of the literary fame of the gifted poet whose dust might well have been mingled with the dust of his brother poets within these walls. Others will speak, in nearer circles, of the close affection which bound the pastor to his flock, the friend to his friends, the father to the children, and the husband to the wife, in that romantic home which is now for ever identified with his name, and beside which he rests beneath the yews which he planted with his own hands, and the giant fir-trees that fling their protecting arms from above. But that which alone is fitting to urge from this place, is the moral and religious significance of the career which has left a spot void, as if where a rare plant has grown which no earth can reproduce, but of which the peculiar fragrance still lingers with those who may have ever come within its reach. To the vast congregations which hung upon his lips in this church; to the wide world which looked eagerly for the utterances which will come no more from that burning spirit; to the loving friends who mourn over the sudden extinction of a heart of fire, the sudden relaxation of the grasp of a hand of iron, I would recall some of those higher strains which, amid manifold imperfections, acknowledged by none more

freely than by himself, placed him unquestionably amongst the conspicuous teachers of his time, and gave to his voice a power of reaching hearts to which other preachers and teachers often appealed in vain. It has seemed to me that there are three main lessons of his course and character which may be summed up in the three parts of the apostolic farewell which I have chosen for my text. "*Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.*" Watch! that is to say, be awake, be wakeful; have your eyes open, the eyes of your senses, your mind, and your conscience. Such, surely, was the wakefulness, the vigilance, the devouring curiosity of him whose life and conversation, as he walked amongst ordinary men, was as that of a waker amongst drowsy sleepers, a watchful sentinel in advance of a slumbering host. The diversity of human character, and the tragedy of human life, were always to him as an ever-opening, unfolding book; but even more than to the glories and wonders of man he was, far beyond what falls to the lot of most, alive and awake in every pore to the beauty and marvels of nature. That contrast in the old story of "Eyes and No Eyes" was the contrast between him and common people. That eagle eye seemed to discern every shade and form of animal and vegetable life; that listening ear, like that of the hero in the fairy tale, seemed about to catch the growing of the grass and the opening of the shell. Nature was to him a true companion, speaking with a thousand voices; and nature was to him also the voice of God, the face of the Eternal and the Invisible, as it can only be to those who study, and love, and know it. For his was no idle dreamer's pleasure; it was a wakefulness, not only to the force and beauty of the outward world, but to the causes of those mysterious operations, to the explanations given by its patient students and explorers. Never, or hardly ever, did he join

in the presumptuous condemnation or the cowardly fear of science and scientific men. They were fellow-workers with him and he with them. From his fearless confidence in the results of physical research take comfort, O ye of little faith! Open wide your eyes and ears to every breathing of the Divine Spirit, to every accent of the Divine truth. To you as to Him "let everything that hath breath praise" the Eternal God. Children gathering shells on the seashore, fishermen by chalk streams, huntsmen on the bright days of autumn and of winter, watchers of the secret growth of plant and insect, and penetrating streams and shifting soil, fear not to learn and to teach those lessons of holy and innocent enjoyment which awakened in him constant praise of the Eternal Cause. Who can fail to derive a sense of grim consolation—may we not even say of Christian philosophy—as he encounters even in the bitter, biting blast of our sharp English winter, or yet sharper spring, that moral lesson, that living sermon, breathed into it by those exulting lines which will never grow old as long as the east wind blows, or the English nation lasts?

"Welcome back, North-easter,
O'er the German foam,
O'er the Danish moorlands,
From thy frozen home.

Come, as came our fathers,
Heralded by thee,
Conquering from the eastward,
Lords by land and sea.

Come, and strong within us
Stir the Viking's blood,
Bracing nerve and sinew;
Blow, thou wind of God."

And this leads me to the second part of the Apostolic maxim, "Quit you like men, be strong." If there was

any one of our time with whom this precept was associated even to exaggeration, it was with him who is gone. That famous phrase, which he indeed repudiated for himself, but which became inextricably attached to his name, was but the Apostle's words in modern form. No doubt the Bible overflows with sympathy for the sorrowful, the feeble, and the suffering; but it is also full of heart-stirring commands to "play the man," to be men in understanding, to "quit" us like men, and "be strong and very courageous." Christianity, if it is to hold its own, ought to be what it claims to be; must be, not only gentle, feminine, and sweet, but muscular, masculine, and strong. But, in fact, the two sides thus represented in the Bible, certainly as exemplified in him, are not inconsistent—rather, in their best form, they are inseparable. No one was more chivalrously respectful towards women, more tender to the weak and suffering. Of all his songs, of all his utterances, the one that will live the longest in the mouths of men, is that which is full, not of the fierce spirit of the old sea kings, but of the wailing and weeping cry of simple human pathos,

"O Mary, call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee."

Even in his rude conflicts with the superstitions of mediæval times, half his force was derived from his kindly appreciation of their nobler side. "The Saint's Tragedy" would have been to him no tragedy, had he not recognised that Elizabeth of Thuringia was, indeed, a true Christian saint. And this gave yet more strength to the determined stand he made in what he deemed an effeminate age—the stand he made for the vigorous, courageous, straightforward aspect of true religion—the sense that justice and truth and courage were as essentially saint-like as tenderness, beneficence, and devotion.

It was this which roused his chivalrous defence in his earlier life for those whom, perhaps in excess, he thought oppressed and neglected. It was this which roused his chivalrous defence in his later life for those whom, also perhaps in excess, he regarded as sacrificed to popular prejudice. It was this profound feeling of the rights of the poor and the duties of the rich that kindled the fiery pages of "*Yeast*" and "*Alton Locke*." It was this impatience of a sickly sentimental theology that drew down his condemnation alike of the monk of the thirteenth century and of the fanatical preacher of the nineteenth. It was this moral enthusiasm which, in the pages of "*Hypatia*," has scathed with an everlasting brand the name of the Alexandrian Cyril and his followers, for their outrage upon humanity and morality in the name of a hollow Christianity and a spurious orthodoxy. It was righteous indignation against what seemed to him the glorification of a tortuous and ambiguous policy, which betrayed him into the only personal controversy in which he was ever entangled, and in which, matched in unequal conflict with the most subtle and dexterous controversialist of modern times, it is not surprising that he was apparently worsted, whatever we may think of the ultimate issue. It was this passion for gallant deeds and adventurous daring that created the characters of Lancelot and Amyas Lee, which revived the heroes of Greece for the young and those of the Elizabethan age for the old. It was this sense of his being a thorough Englishman, this sense that he was one of yourselves, working, toiling, and feeling with you and like you, that endeared him to you, artisans and working-men of London, and to you, rising youth of England. You know how he desired with a passionate desire that you should have pure air, pure water, habitable dwellings; that you should be able, as far as possible, to share the courtesies, the refinements,

the elevation of citizens and of Englishmen; and you might, therefore, trust him the more when he told you from the pulpit, and would still tell you from the grave, that your homes and your lives should be no less full of purity and of light—that vice, and idleness, and meanness, and dishonesty are base and contemptible and miserable. “Stand fast in the faith.” The deceased was a striking example of the truth that a Christian clergyman need not be a member of a separate caste, or a stranger to the common interests of his countrymen; yet, human, genial, layman as he was, he still was not the less—nay, he was ten times the more—a pastor than he would have been had he shut himself out from the hearts and haunts of men. Scholar, poet, novelist, he yet felt himself to be with all and before all a spiritual teacher and guide. He was not a profound theologian. One fatherly friend and counsellor he followed closely. He felt that to him he owed his own self; and he would sometimes playfully say that it was enough for him to be to the outside world the interpreter of Frederick Maurice. There were two main doctrines which he held with a fervour and tenacity of his own, with a freshness and a vigour which amounted almost to the originality of genius, and which in his teaching enlightened and controlled and coloured even the most antique and the most trite of the ordinary teaching of past or present time. One of these was, that the main religion of mankind and of Christendom consisted in the strict fulfilment of the duty of man, which was the will of God; and the other was the absolute and eternal goodness of God. When the shadows of death were closing him round, still we are told the same beatific vision of that which alone makes the blessedness of Heaven was before his failing sight, “How beautiful,” he said, “is God!”

DEAN STANLEY.

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Job.

The Book of Job is one of the grandest sections of Divine Scripture. It has never yet, to our knowledge, been treated in a purely Homiletic method for Homiletic ends. Besides many learned expositions on the book found in our general commentaries, we have special exegetical volumes of good scholarly and critical worth; such as Drs. Barnes, Wemyss, Mason Goode, Noyes Lee, Delitzsch, and Herman Helwig Bernard: the last is in every way a masterly production. For us, therefore, to go into philology and verbal criticism, when such admirable works are available to all students, would be superfluous, if not presumption. Ambiguous terms, when they occur, we shall of course explain, and occasionally suggest an improved rendering; but our work will be chiefly, if not entirely, Homiletic. We shall essay to bring out from the grand old words those Divine verities which are true and vital to man as man in all lands and ages. These truths we shall frame in an order as philosophic and suggestive as our best powers will enable us to do; and this in order to help the earnest preachers of God's Holy Word.

Subject: The Third Speech of Eliphaz. (2) The Recriminatory Section.

"Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?" etc.—JOB xxii. 5-14.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS: Ver. 5.—"*Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?*" What Eliphaz probably means by this expression is this, "Since I see thy sufferings are great, thy sins must also be great; thy matchless afflictions prove to me thy matchless iniquities." This is the only place in the Bible, it is said, where the word "infinite" has been applied to sin, and yet theology bases an argument for the interminableness of torment on the infinitude of sin.

Ver. 6.—"*For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing.*" (Margin, "the cloth of the naked.") The probability is that this charge is an unfounded calumny. If Eliphaz did not fabricate it himself, he based it perhaps upon the words of some slanderer, for slanderers have ever abounded. Anyhow, it is interesting to know that Eliphaz regarded injustice and cruelty towards the helpless as an enormous crime.

Ver. 7.—"*Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.*" Here is the charge of inhospitality, which amongst the Orientals was always regarded as a great sin.

Ver. 8.—"*But as for the mighty man* (margin, "man of arm"), *he had the earth; and the honourable man* (margin, "eminent, or accepted for countenance") *dwelt in it.*" By this he means to say that Job, in the days of his prosperity and influence, had used his great power in a way not humane. His might went against the right. This also, perhaps, in all probability was false.

Ver. 9.—“*Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken.*” This charge Job subsequently contradicts (xxix. 11-16) in language the most sublime and impressive.

Ver. 10.—“*Therefore snares are round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee.*” Here comes out his false and pernicious logic. “Therefore.” The history of Providence protests against this “therefore.” Suffering here is no test of character.

Ver. 11.—“*Or darkness, that thou canst not see; and abundance of waters cover thee.*” “Darkness” and “waters” are employed elsewhere, as well as here, to signify great affliction.

Ver. 12, 13, 14.—“*Is not God in the height of heaven? and behold the height of the stars, how high they are! And thou sayest, How doth God know? Can He judge through the dark cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to Him, that He seeth not; and He walketh in the circuit of heaven.*”

“Is not Eloah high as the heavens?
See but the head of the stars how exalted!
So then thou thinkest, What doth God know?
Can He judge through the thick cloud?
Clouds veil Him, that He seeth not;
And in the vault of heaven He walketh at His pleasure.”

Delitzsch.

Here Eliphaz seems to charge Job with the error of regarding God as so remote from the earth, so far up in the regions of immensity, as not to know what was going on on this little planet. Perhaps Eliphaz drew this conclusion from the circumstance that Job denied that God punished the wicked according to their conduct in this world. His thoughts seemed to be this, Because thou entertainest this idea, thou thinkest that God is too great and too far away to notice the sins of individual men.

HOMILETICS.—This section of this third speech of Eliphaz we have designated the *Discriminatory*. The charge here brought against Job is twofold, the one wrong in relation to man, and the other wrong in relation to God.

I. Wrong in relation to MAN. In regard to the charge which he here brings against Job, it is worthy of note that whilst most expositors regard Eliphaz as speaking in his own name, others, amongst whom Dr. Bernard, regard him as indicating merely the charges which the Almighty might bring against him. “If,” says Dr. Bernard, “Eliphaz and the other friends had known Job to have committed such atrocities as are enumerated in these verses, we can hardly believe that

they would have come to sympathize with and comfort him; much less that they would have torn their garments and sprinkled dust upon their heads on account of the fall of such a barbarous oppressor. Moreover, since Job had challenged them as early as chap. vi. 24 to point out to him in what he had erred, it is difficult to understand how, if they had charges like these to bring forward against him—charges which they could not have failed to perceive must put him to the blush and silence him for ever and ever—they could have kept back till now. The truth of the matter is, Eliphaz merely meant to say this, We certainly cannot point out to you a single thing in which you have done wrong; but this does not prove that God could not, as He may have seen you commit many atrocious crimes, which remain concealed from us as well as others who know you." But even if he is supposed to speak in the name of the Almighty, he must be regarded as endorsing the charges himself. From what we know of this Eliphaz, there is no reason to believe that he would be so impious as to put into the mouth of the Almighty charges against men if they were unfounded and false. We are justified, therefore, in regarding his language as *recriminatory*.

What is the charge that he brings here against Job in relation to his conduct toward man? It is his flagrant inhumanity. (1) He was *rapacious*. "For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing." He extorted even from his own brother a "pledge" to which he had no just claim, and stripped the ill-clad of their tattered garments. (2) He was *inhospitable*. "Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry." To those parched with thirst and exhausted by hunger he showed no sympathy, stretched forth no helping hand. (3) He was *tyrannic*. "But as for the mighty man, he had the earth; and the honourable man dwelt in it. Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken." His great power he had used, not to help the widow, the orphan, the indigent, but to crush them. In all

this he means to say that Job's iniquities were "infinite," and that his punishment therefore was condign and signal.

The other charge which he here brings against Job :

II. Wrong in relation to God. "Is not God in the height of heaven? And behold the height of the stars, how high they are! And thou sayest, How doth God know? Can He judge through the thick cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to Him, that He seeth not; and He walketh in the circuit of heaven." His charge here against Job in relation to God, is a denial of the Divine *inspection and superintendence of individual man*. This error, which he falsely charges on Job, was the leading error of the old Epicureans, and the leading error of deists in all ages. Now, although this allegation was in all probability unfounded in relation to Job, it is undeniably applicable to the vast majority of men of all creeds and churches, regions and religions, territories and times. Idolatrous images, immorality in life, formality in worship, moral dulness in mind, are abundant proofs that man regards God as a Being foreign and remote. If all men felt God to be in conscious contact with them, idolatry, immorality, dormancy of soul, could not exist. Many causes have been assigned for man's tendency to regard God as remote, such as, (1) The mediatory method of Divine operation. He does not deal directly with man. (2) Man's power of spontaneous action. He is left free, he does not feel the hand of God on the springs of his being. (3) The unbroken regularity of natural laws. Nature shows no changes, indicates no interruption. (4) The disorders of the moral world. Sin is allowed to prosper, crimes to run riot; but the grand cause is *dread of God*. Men have sinned, and their guilty consciences invest the Almighty with such attributes of vengeance that they turn away in horror from Him. The language of each man is, "Depart from me, for I desire not a knowledge of Thee."*

CONCLUSION. Learn from this,—

First: *That in natural religion the ill-treatment of our fellow-*

* See *Homilist*, Series III., vol. x., page 270.

men is regarded as a great crime. There is no reason to believe that Eliphaz had any revelation from God but that which nature supplies; and yet in his language to Job he expresses in a strong and unmistakable manner his conviction, that to be, not only cruel, but even inhospitable to our fellow-men is wicked. The obligation to be socially sympathetic, loving, and kind, the God of love has written on the human soul. When men become reckless in relation to the interests of their fellow-men, grow callous and malign, they outrage the law of their own nature. Xenocrates, though a heathen, was pitiful to a poor sparrow, that, being pursued by a hawk, fled to him for succour. He sheltered her until the enemy was fled, and afterwards letting her go, said, *Se supplicem non prodidisse*, that he had not betrayed his poor suppliant.

Learn,—

Secondly: *That men often denounce evils in others of which they themselves are guilty.* Strong as was the implied denunciation of Eliphaz against unkindness in Job, was he not himself unkind in tantalizing him now when he was overwhelmed with suffering, by charges that were utterly false? So it ever has been: the man who has the "beam" in his own eye is most ready to discover the "mote" in his brother's. Indeed, as a rule, the greatest sinner is the greatest censor. How severe was the judgment which David pronounced upon the man whose portrait Nathan drew! How rigorous and hasty was the judgment which the proud Pharisee in the temple passed upon the penitential publican! How ready were the Scribes and Pharisees to pronounce the severest judgment even upon the conduct of Christ and His disciples! The greatest sinners adjudged to death the holiest being that ever trod this earth, the blessed Son of God. There is no difficulty in accounting for this remarkable and patent fact.

Sermonic Glances at the Gospel of St. John.

As our purpose in the treatment of this Gospel is purely the development, in the briefest and most suggestive form, of Sermonic outlines, we must refer our readers to the following works for all critical inquiries into the author and authorship of the book, and also for any minute criticisms on difficult clauses. The works we shall especially consult are:—"Introduction to New Testament," by Bleek; "Commentary on John," by Tholuck; "Commentary on John," by Hengstenberg; "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels," by Westcott; "The Gospel History," by Ebrard; "Our Lord's Divinity," by Liddon; "St. John's Gospel," by Oosterzee; "Doctrines of the Person of Christ," by Dorner; Lange; etc., etc.

Subject: Christ's first two Discourses at the Feast of Tabernacles.

"And many of the people believed on Him, and said, When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than these which this man hath done? The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning Him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him. Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent Me. Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come. Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will He go, that we shall not find Him? will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What manner of saying is this that He said, Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come?—JOHN vii. 31-36.

EXPOSITION: Ver. 31.—"*And many of the people believed.*" "But of the multitude many believed." Their belief means perhaps nothing more than a passing impression that He was the Messiah, and does not include that faith in Him which secures everlasting life. "*When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than these which this man hath done?*" This implies that there was (1) A general belief that the true Messiah would work miracles. The Old Testament gave them to understand this (Isa. xxxv. 5, 6). (2) A general acknowledgment that Christ's miracles had already been great. "Will He do more miracles?"—more signs.

Ver. 32.—"*The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things*

concerning Him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him." Here the actuating motive of the persecutors of Jesus is revealed. They feel a species of rivalry against Him; they fear the loss of their popularity and authority, and never can pardon Him for gaining the affections and even, in some measure, the belief of His countrymen. Death—the cross can alone make reparation.

Ver. 33.—"Then said Jesus unto them." To whom? To the officers, or to the Pharisees who gave information, or to the whole assembly? Probably to the whole, with the chief priests especially in view; "Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent Me." Probably He meant by this language to intimate to His enemies that they need not be in a hurry to seize Him, as His departure by death was just at hand. But although they would lose Him from their midst, He would not be in the grave, but with His Father. "I go unto Him that sent Me."

Ver. 34.—"Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come." You will one day search earnestly for Me, but I shall not be found. When the judgment of Heaven falls on your nation (Matt. xxiv. 23), you will be anxious to find Me, as your Deliverer. "Thither ye cannot come." I shall be beyond the reach of your malicious and murderous designs, in a state for which you possess no congeniality, and into which you cannot enter.

Ver. 35.—"Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will He go, that we shall not find Him? will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?" The mocking malice of their reply (in vain questioned by Meyer) rises into a climax of three clauses: (1) Whither will He go, that we might not follow Him? (Into Paradise?) (2) Whither will He seek His fortune, among the Jewish dispersion among the Gentiles—with the less orthodox, less respectable and intelligent Jews? (3) Or will He even teach the Greeks, to whom, indeed, judging from His conduct towards the law and His liberal utterance He seems rather to belong to than to us? But what they say in mockery must fulfil itself in truth: they prophesy like Caiaphas (chap. xi. 50, 51) and Pilate (xix. 19). "Unto the dispersed among the Greeks." The *διασπορά* (dispersion, abstract. *pro concret.*) τῶν Ἑλλήνων (genitive of remoter relation) not the dispersed Gentiles (*Chrysostom*) or Hellenists or Greek Jews (*Scaliger*), but, according to specific usage (Jas. i. 1; 1 Pet. i. 1), the Jews dispersed in the Gentile world.

Ver. 36.—"What manner of saying is this that He said, Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come?" Literally, What is this saying that He said? They feel the dark mystery of the words, and wished, probably, to regard them as nonsense.

HOMILETICS.—We have in these verses two classes of men in relation to Christ; those who were favourably disposed, and those who were malignantly opposed.

I. Those who were FAVOURABLY DISPOSED. "And many of the people believed on Him, and said, When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" These people were the commonalty, as we should say, the lower classes who were more or less unsophisticated and free from religious prejudices and vested interests in existing institutions. Elsewhere it is said, these common "people heard Christ gladly." These people's faith in Him did not, in all probability, go farther than to dispose them favourably towards His teaching. It did not prompt them to commit themselves entirely to Him, to follow Him through evil as well as good report. They were sufficiently instructed in religion to know that the Messiah would be a miracle-worker, and they had witnessed so many of the miracles of Christ that they were disposed to regard Him as the promised One, the Anointed of God. They did not say, This is indeed the Christ; but, Is not this He?

First: Their favourable disposition towards Him was *grounded upon facts*. There did not seem to be any question even amongst His malignant opponents as to the reality of His miracles. None seemed to deny them, or even to question them.

Secondly: Their favourable disposition towards Him *intensified the opposition of His enemies*. "The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning Him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him." They felt that if the people believed in Him, their influence would wane, their authority depart, and all the honours and immunities connected with their elevated position would vanish. Hence the good opinions expressed now by the people fell as oil on the flames of their malignity.

Now, through all Christendom there has always been a large class of the people favourably disposed towards Christ; and their good opinions are based upon undeniable facts concerning Him. This class, even as in the days of Christ, intensify the opposition of enemies. When the atheist, the scientific infidel, the worldling, and the profligate mark the favourable

disposition of the people towards Christ, they, like these Pharisees and chief priests, only become the more anxious to banish Him from the world. Were it not for the favourably disposed people, Christianity would soon be extinguished. Popular sentiment is our bulwark against infidelity. The other class here are—

II. Those who were MALIGNANTLY OPPOSED. These were the "Pharisees" and the "chief priests." Three remarks are suggested concerning them.

First: *They were to be deprived of the fellowship of Christ.* "Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you," etc. But six months after this, Christ was crucified, and afterwards ascended to heaven and returned to the bosom of His Father. It was only a "little while" that He was in their midst; it would have been well for them if they had availed themselves of that "little while." The period of redemptive mercy with all men is but a "little while." When He departed they lost Him for ever. Their sympathies and characters excluded them from all future fellowship with Him.

Secondly: *They would vainly seek the help of Christ.* "Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me." The hour is approaching when the Roman legions would invade their country, destroy Jerusalem, and overwhelm their land with such desolation as had never been before, and perhaps never will be again. Then they would look out for Divine deliverance, but none would come. "Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me." There is a time to seek the Lord, a time when He may be found; and there is a time when He will be sought and will not be found. "Many shall say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord!"

Thirdly: *They misunderstood the meaning of Christ.* "Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will He go, that we shall not find Him? will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What manner of say is this that He said, Ye shall seek Me and shall not find Me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come." (1) They started from His words an ungenerous conjecture. "Will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the

Gentiles?" That is, "Will He go amongst the Jews who are scattered amongst the Gentiles, or the Gentiles dispersed over all the world? In either case He will go to a contemptible class of men, men to be treated with disdain. If He leaves our glorious country, where else can He go but amongst such despicable people." (2) They failed to attach to His words the true idea. "What manner of saying is this?" They had not reached the idea of His Divine mission and destiny; they were carnal, and judged after the flesh.

Thus it ever is with this class,—the malignant opponents of Christ,—they are deprived of His fellowship. Their morally corrupt natures exclude them from all intercourse with Him. Where He is, they cannot come. He is in the sublime region of purity, righteousness, and benevolence; they are down in the depths of depravity. They must all seek the help of Christ one day, when it will be too late. On the last great day they shall agonize to enter in at the strait gate of His kingdom, and shall not be able, for the Master will have risen up and shut the door. They all misunderstand His meaning. They have eyes but see not, ears but hear not. They judge after the flesh, they live in the letter.

CONCLUSION: To which of these classes dost thou belong, my reader? Most probably the former. Albeit to be merely favourably disposed to Christ is not enough; there must be decision, consecration, vital alliance. Shouldest thou per-adventure belong to the latter, ponder thy condition ere it be too late. "Yet a little while" and the day of grace will be over; then thou wilt seek Him but wilt not find Him.

Germs of Thought.

Subject: Pluck and Promptitude.

"Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad."—JUDGES iii. 31.

THIS gives us an idea what *pluck* can do for a man, when stimulated by a sense of justice, the love of his country, and home. Through the corrupting influence of their neighbours, Israel had gone after other gods to serve them, and God's anger was kindled against them. The land was desolate, commerce of all kinds was abandoned, and even government was trodden down by the feet of injustice and cruelty. The highways, where honest men used to travel, were deserted and infested by robbers, while honest men had to skulk through by-ways and forests, in going from place to place. The land was infested with robbers and murderers, who made no secret of their mission. The wells and the fountains were surrounded by them, making it death to the Israelites to come hither to draw. Who could imagine a more terrible state of things? and all, we are told, brought on by themselves. Oh, as individuals and as nations, how many enemies vex us, how many calamities crush us, directly as the result of our own sin and rebellion against God? Those terrible baptisms of fire and water which have been poured out upon the world so frequently of late, and which, for some reason, appear to prefer our own citizens as their favourite subjects, are not without a lesson to teach us, if we only had eyes to read it. Verily our land is full of idols—idols of gold, and lusts, and preferment, and office, before which men are bowing and offering what rightly belongs to God, etc. In this state of Israel's excitement and danger, it seems that Shamgar was ploughing in the field, when six hundred Philistines either went in the direction of his house or came upon him. Burning with indignation and a spirit of holy revenge, he sprang upon them, single handed and alone, with no weapon but his ox goad, and never halted till the last man lay dead at his feet. To my mind

there is something wonderful in this unique battle. I wonder that he escaped when surrounded by such a multitude. And I wonder the Philistines stood their ground till the last man was slain. I learn from this, *that men may have courage to sacrifice themselves on the altar of a bad cause as well as a good one.* In a higher realm of service than the field of physical conflict, we are told that "one shall chase a thousand;" but I think for Shamgar to kill "six hundred with an ox goad," was a feat of daring and valour equally marvellous.

In gathering up the lessons suggested by the text I notice—

I. THAT THE SPIRIT IN WHICH MEN GRAPPLE WITH DIFFICULTIES IN PURSUING THE AVOCATIONS OF LIFE, WILL SHAPE AND COLOUR THEIR FUTURE. Shamgar was ploughing in his field when the Philistines came upon him. It speaks well for Shamgar that he was ploughing in such a time of trouble, for the country was in a state of desolation. Few men, I presume, had either the courage or desire to plough. I learn here, that in times of national distress, or spiritual deadness or trouble in the Church, it is a great blessing to have a Shamgar here and there, driving on with their work as though nothing had happened. Such men impart a new impulse to the waning energies of those around them; and the energy and hopefulness they get at the plough fit them to mow down the Philistines when they come. In acquiring an education, or fitting yourself for any honourable profession, you will find the Philistines of discouragement pouring in upon you, and, as the condition of success, you must grapple with and overcome them. The road of advance must be cut right through them. Oh, how many young men are worse than a failure because they are afraid of the labour and difficulties between them and success! Many a promising young man has come forward and planted his hands upon the top rail of some honourable purpose or profession; his very movements produced high hopes in others as to his future; everybody expected he would soon scale the obstacles and master the position; but after a few abortive efforts he took his hands off, and never put them on again. Alas! how many have acted thus in regard to the most hon-

ourable of all callings, a religious life. By their profession they produce high hopes as to the future ; but they take off their hands, and remain just in the old place. The Philistines deter them. Shamgar was an humble labouring man ; but his conduct at that crisis raised him to be Judge of Israel. Learn from this, that the meeting of present emergencies, and the faithful discharge of present duty, is the true road to advancement and honour. Let a man fill the place where he is, to overflowing with himself, and God will soon invite him to a broader place.

II. THAT BLAMING OUR INSTRUMENTS OR SURROUNDINGS, IN THE ABSENCE OF SUCCESS, IS GREAT FOLLY. Shamgar used an ox goad—a rod about six inches in circumference at the larger end, which was flattened and fitted with an iron scraper for the plough, and the smaller end was supplied with a sharp prickler to urge on the oxen. People are constantly blaming their instruments, when they ought to blame themselves. Some say, "If I only had good influences at home, if I only had an education, if I only had ready utterance, if I only had consistent Christians around me, I could do something." I say most emphatically, "*No* ; a thousand times *No*." Look to your own spirit and to God more, and to your instruments less. God will help you to cut your way to victory with but an ox goad, if you have nothing better.

III. THAT A MAN SHOULD BE NATURAL, AND USE THE INSTRUMENTS WHICH HE KNOWS BEST HOW TO HANDLE. The ox goad in the hands of Shamgar was better than a minié rifle. He knew the spring and feel of it so perfectly. Let every man be fighting the battles of life, but in his own way and with his own weapons. Rather wield the sling and stone, than stand in the cumbersome armour of Goliath. Every person should try to improve in speech and manner ; but let no man be so far an ape as to lose his individuality in that of another.

IV. THAT WE SHOULD NOT RIDICULE WEAPONS THAT HAVE NOT BEEN OFFICIALLY TRIED OR TECHNICALLY APPROVED. Who ever dreamed before, that one man could kill six hundred men with an ox goad? Ever since the days of the Apostles, God has

signally honoured men who might be termed the mere ox goads of society, in letters and attainment.

America.

T. KELLY, M.A.

Subject: The Course of Truth.

"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place."—2 Cor. ii. 14.

TO an earnest and intelligent Christian, next in interest and importance to the study of the life and times of Jesus Christ, is the study of the life and times of the early Christians, and the history of the primitive Church. In the "Gospels" we have a record of some of the sayings and doings of our blessed Lord, and in the "Acts" and "Epistles" we learn what the Holy Spirit wrought through the instrumentality of the Apostles. The special mission of our Lord was "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" and the disciples were to begin their great work "at Jerusalem." But the Apostle Paul was chosen to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, and to carry the word of life into what the Jews called the heathen world. Inspired by the Holy Spirit and constrained by Christ's mighty love, the Apostle went forth, determined to glory in nothing save in the Cross of Christ his Lord; and wherever he went signs and wonders were wrought in the name of the holy child Jesus. In Corinth,—the capital of the Roman province of Achaia in the southern part of Greece,—the Gospel signally triumphed; and in this second letter to the Church there, the Apostle commends the Christians for the renewed love and zeal which his first letter had awakened, and calls upon them to join with him in gratitude to God, from whom all moral victory comes, "Now thanks," etc. The imagery of these words, doubtless, was borrowed from the customs of the ancient Greeks and Romans when returning in triumph from battle, and in celebrating famous victories, when the vanquished would be led through the cities prisoners in procession, and the air would be filled with the savour of burning incense. The preaching of the Gospel in apostolic times was

a series of glorious successes, and presents to us a striking and faithful picture of *the course of truth*; and my object in this homily is to trace the analogy between the progress of the Gospel in apostolic times and the times in which we live, and to show that we have as much cause as the Apostle had to exclaim, "Now thanks be unto God," etc. The words of our text bring before us:—

I. THE GLORIOUS PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL IN APOSTOLIC TIMES. (a) *It was triumphant.* The Apostle did not find the hearts of men easy of access, so that he had but to enter and take possession. He did not walk over the ground, and proceed unopposed in the prosecution of his great enterprise. He found he had national and natural prejudices to overcome, and strongholds of sin and Satan to pull down. Every inch of the ground he won for Christ had to be won by hard fighting and the exhibition of the sublimest heroism. Armed in the panoply which he recommended to the Ephesian Church, he contended with every form of antagonism, and counted not his life dear unto him, determined to "fight the good fight" and finish his course with joy. "Causeth us to triumph." The victory was not a carnal one, over men's bodies; but a moral one, over men's hearts and minds: men became new creatures, gave up their old habits, and adopted a new mode of life. The Gospel triumphed over the wills of men, over Greek, and Roman, and Jew; and in that we see evidence of the *Divinity*, as well as the *power* of invincible truth. And for eighteen centuries the Gospel has gone on in its triumphant progress. It has been resisted and opposed by the most bitter antagonism, from the days of Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian, to the times Gibbon and Hume, Voltaire and Paine. Men have tried to stab it with their tongues and pens, and curse it with their books; but the course of truth has been one of victory. Every opponent has been skilfully and successfully met and defeated; and, to-day the Gospel is winning for itself fresh renown. In East and West, and North and South, it is overcoming one hindrance after another, going on from victory to victory, confirming our belief that no weapon formed

against it shall finally prosper. (β) *It was intelligent.* The Apostles did not go forth demanding a blind and unquestioning acquiescence in all they had to say; they did not desire to keep the Scriptures from the people, and to teach the heresy, that "ignorance is the mother of devotion." What they had to proclaim were facts well authenticated; and they therefore asked for intelligent and intelligible belief. Any reader of Paul's sermons and epistles must see that he was a faithful witness; he told "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." The progress of the Gospel was victory over darkness and ignorance; the victory, not of the secular sword, but of the sacred pen and the tongue of fire. It was "the saviour of his knowledge" that was made known; and men had ample opportunities and materials to prove that knowledge theoretically, and especially experimentally. And the progress of the Gospel has always been an intelligent one. Witness the condition and literature of the early Fathers, of the lights in the dark ages; note how the great Reformation of the sixteenth century was associated with the revival of learning, and how the revival of the eighteenth century was secured by the united agency of the pulpit and the press. Our missionaries, when they go to the heathen, encourage them to read for themselves by translating the Scriptures into the native tongue; and do all that is possible to ensure an intelligent as well as a triumphant progress of the truth. The Gospel has nothing to fear from real learning and intelligence; they help it, and,—as we rejoice to know,—some of earth's brightest and best intellects have bowed and worshipped at its holy shrine. (γ) *It was constant.* "Always cansteth us to triumph," "in every place." Sometimes it seemed doubtful which would win, truth or error; but it soon became decided that faith was the stronger, that more was with it than all that could be against it. Wherever the Apostle went, he found the Gospel adapted to meet the spiritual needs of men; it was at home in every quarter of the globe, and among all the races of mankind. In the history of the Church, down to the present time, progress has been constant. There is no place

on earth where the truth has failed ; it always triumphs ; and in every place, wherever the preachers of the Cross go and plant their standard, the truth finds a permanent footing and has inherent power to propagate itself. Those who blow the Gospel trumpet, have never been taught to blow a retreat ; theirs is the cry, " Forward ! " " On, on to victory ! " and the time shall come when all earthly antagonism shall be hushed, and Jesus shall reign from the rising to the setting of the sun.

(i) *It was beneficent.* The march of the army of King Jesus was not like the march of the conquering armies of Greece and Rome. The course of truth was not marked by bloodshed and the slaughter of those who set themselves in array against her ; her mission was, " not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." " The savour of his knowledge." Men were shown how they might be pardoned, and saved from the death that never dies. And the course of " truth as it is in Jesus," has ever been beneficent ; it elevates men in the physical, mental, and moral scale ; it lifts woman into her proper sphere, calls attention to the aged and infirm, demands for children tender care, and in every way helps to lessen suffering and sorrow, and brightens and betters man's position here. For this world, truth brings in her train life, light, liberty, and love ; and for the world to come, she holds out a crown and throne. The course of truth, in apostolic and modern times, has been triumphant, intelligent, constant, beneficent.

II. THE GLORIOUS SECRET OF THE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL IN APOSTOLIC TIMES. Paul's humility is as conspicuous as his boldness, in all he said and did. With what care from time to time he taught those who had been blessed through the Gospel he had preached unto them, that it was God who had given the increase ! He placed the name of Jesus above every name, and was willing to sink into oblivion, so that God might be all and in all. Paul felt that his successes had been of God, the results of His presence and power ; and he calls upon the Corinthians to join with him in adoring gratitude. " Now thanks be unto God," etc. (a) *The Apostle acknowledged that God was the author of the progress.* He felt it was with God that he had to do. However laboriously he may have

laboured, however earnestly he may have preached, it was God who had won the victory over human hearts, and had subdued stubborn wills. This was what gave the Apostles such strength to labour and suffer, the realization of the fact that God was with them, accomplishing His own work. How near and dear God was to the first preachers of the Cross ! They felt they were doing God's work. (8) *The Apostle acknowledged that Christ was the agent of the progress.* "Triumph in Christ." Jesus had been the agent in the great work of human redemption. It was His Gospel the Apostle preached, and through His spirit—through the Holy Ghost whom He sent—that the triumphs were won. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself;" and God was through Christ, winning men from the bondage of Satan into the liberty of the children of light. The Apostle could not leave the Saviour out of his song ; God, through Christ, enabled His servants to advance His truth among men. (9) *The Apostle acknowledged that man was the instrument of the progress.* "Cansteth us to triumph," "by us in every place." What a wonderful blending of workers,—“God,” “Christ,” “us”—the union of Divine power and human instrumentality ! The Apostles did not originate the Gospel, they received it. They did not extend it by their own unaided power, they were only instruments in the hand of God ; and the consciousness of this fact would keep them both humble and heroic. "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon;" and, the sword of the Spirit and the Apostles.

Let every Christian worker learn from this the source and secret of success in the work of the Lord. "Attempt great things for God, and expect great things from God." We must use the means, place ourselves as instruments in God's hands, and then "in Christ" we shall triumph ; the enemies of the Cross shall be subdued, and large accessions shall be made to the army of the Lord ; and, when our discharge from the war shall come, we shall be more than conquerors through Him who hath loved us, and we shall have an abundant entrance into the joy of our Lord.

Bristol.

F. W. BROWN.

Biblical Criticism.

Subject : Daniel.

THE Book of Daniel is assigned in the Hebrew canon to the third division, called Hagiographa. Daniel, like Jeremiah, has interwoven into his writings so many biographical notices of himself that we gather from them a pretty full history of his life. He belonged to the royal family of Judah, being one of the number "of the king's seed and of the princes" whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried captive to Babylon in an invasion not recorded in the books of Kings or Chronicles. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy recorded in Isaiah xxxix. 7. But God graciously turned this into a rich blessing to the Hebrew nation; for Daniel, having been educated with his three companions, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, "in the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans," and having "understanding in all visions and dreams,"—a remarkable proof of which he gave by relating to Nebuchadnezzar the dream which had gone from him, with its interpretation—was made a "ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon;" and at his request his three companions were also set over the affairs of the province of Babylon. He continued in high honour at the court of Babylon as a wise and incorruptible statesman, and a prophet who had the gift of interpreting dreams, till the overthrow of the Chaldean empire by the Medes and Persians. By Darius the Mede he was treated with like honour (perhaps in connection with his interpretation of Belshazzar's dream), being made chief of the three presidents whom he set over his whole realm; and a plot formed to destroy him was frustrated, through God's miraculous interposition, and turned to the increase of his honour and influence; so that he continued to prosper "in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian." He lived, therefore, to

see the release of his countrymen from their long captivity, though it does not appear that he himself returned to his native land. Probably he continued in the service of the Persian court to the day of his death.

The first chapter is introductory to the whole book, giving an account of the selection and education of Daniel and his three companions by direction of the king of Babylon. The prophecies that follow naturally fall into two series. The first, occupying chapters ii. to vii., is written in Chaldee from the middle of the fourth verse of chapter ii. It unfolds the relation which God's kingdom holds to the heathen powers, as seen in a two-fold vision of the four great monarchies of the world, in the form, first, of an image consisting of four parts, and then of four great beasts rising up out of the sea, the last monarchy being succeeded by the kingdom of the God of heaven, which shall never be destroyed; in the protection and deliverance of God's faithful servants from the persecution of heathen kings and princes; in the humbling of heathen monarchs for their pride, idolatry, and profanation of the sacred vessels belonging to the sanctuary. Thus we see that the first three of these six chapters correspond to the last three taken in an inverse order—the second to the seventh, the third to the sixth, and the fourth to the fifth. The second series, consisting of the remaining five chapters, is written in Hebrew. This also exhibits the conflict between God's kingdom and the heathen world, taking up the second and third monarchies under the images of a ram and a he-goat. There follow some special details relating to the nearer future, with some very remarkable revelations respecting the time of the Messiah's advent, the destruction of the holy city by the Romans, the last great conflict between the kingdom of God and its enemies, and the final resurrection. The intimate connection between the Book of Daniel and the Revelation of John must strike every reader of the Holy Scriptures. They mutually interpret each other, and together constitute one grand system of prophecy extending down to the end of the world. Both also contain predictions, the exact interpretation of which is ex-

tremely difficult, perhaps impossible, till the mystery of God shall be finished.

That they who deny the reality of miracles and prophecy should receive the Book of Daniel as genuine and authentic, is impossible. To review the history of the assaults made by them upon it, or of the volumes written in reply, is foreign to the plan of the present work. A brief summary only will be given of the grounds on which its claim to a place in the canon of the Old Testament is vindicated.

The unity of the Book of Daniel is now generally conceded. "The two leading divisions are so related, that the one implies the existence of the other. Both have the same characteristics of manner and style, though a considerable portion of the book is in Chaldee and the remainder in Hebrew." This being admitted, the book as a whole claims Daniel for its author; for in it he often speaks in the first person; and in the last chapter the book is manifestly ascribed to him.

The uniform tradition of the Jews ascribed the book to Daniel. It was on this ground that they received it into the canon of the Old Testament. The objection that they did not class Daniel with the prophets, but with the Hagiographa, is of no account. Had the book belonged, as the objectors claim, to the Maccabean age, it would not have found a place in the Hagiographa any more than in the prophets. The First Book of Maccabees, which contains authentic history, was never received into the Hebrew canon, because, as the Jews rightly judged, it was written after the withdrawal of the spirit of prophecy. Much less would they have received under the illustrious name of Daniel, a book written as late as the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, more than three centuries and a half after Daniel. That they should have done this through ignorance is inconceivable; that they could have done it through fraud is a supposition not to be admitted for a moment, for it is contrary to all that we know of their conscientious care with regard to the sacred text. *It may be added, that the Book of Baruch, which cannot be placed later than the Maccabean age, and is perhaps earlier, makes abundant use of*

the Book of Daniel; and that the author of the First Book of Maccabees had this book in the Alexandrine version, as is plain from the peculiar expressions employed by him in chap. i. 54—
"They built the abomination of desolation upon the altar."

Josephus relates, among the other particulars of the visit which Alexander the Great made to Jerusalem, that the high-priest Jaddus (Jaddna) showed him the Book of Daniel, "in which he signified that a certain one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians;" and that this, in connection with other extraordinary circumstances narrated by Josephus, had the effect of assuaging the king's wrath, which had been excited against the Jewish high-priest and people by their refusal to render him assistance against Darius, and of disposing him to bestow upon them great favours. Respecting the authenticity of this narrative there has been much discussion; but there is no ground for denying its substantial truth. It bears the stamp of reality, and it accounts, moreover, for the extraordinary privileges conferred upon the Jews by Alexander, which otherwise remain inexplicable.

Christ Himself recognises Daniel as a true prophet. He refers to the future fulfilment of one of his prophecies as a most important sign for His disciples: "When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand), then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains."

The language of the book agrees with the age of Daniel. The writer employs both Hebrew and Chaldee, thus indicating that he lives during the period of transition from the former to the latter language. His Chaldee, moreover, like that of Ezra, contains Hebrew forms such as do not occur in the earliest of the Targums. His Hebrew, on the other hand, agrees in its general character with that of Ezekiel and Ezra. Though the Hebrew survived as the language of the learned for some time after the Captivity, we cannot suppose that so late as the age of Antiochus Epiphanes and the Maccabees a

Jewish author could have employed either such Hebrew as Daniel uses, or such Chaldee.

The author manifests intimate acquaintance with the historical relations, manners, and customs belonging to Daniel's time. Under this head writers have specified the custom of giving new names to those taken into the king's service; the threat that the houses of the magi should be made a dung-hill; the different forms of capital punishment in use among the Chaldeans and Medo-Persians; the dress of Daniel's companions; the presence of women at the royal banquet, etc.

The objections urged against the Book of Daniel are not of a nature to overthrow the mass of evidence in its favour. They may be considered under the following heads:—

Various chronological and historical difficulties. It is said that Jewish history knows no expedition of Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiakim. The answer is, that an expedition which apparently fell about this time is mentioned in 2 Kings xxiv. 1. The actual capture of the city, however, seems not to have taken place before the fourth year of Jehoiakim; for Jeremiah, in a prophecy dated in this fourth year, speaks in terms which imply that the threatened blow had not yet fallen. Perhaps Daniel dates from the beginning of the expedition, so that it fell partly in the third and partly in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. It was in connection with this expedition of Nebuchadnezzar that he overthrew the army of Pharaoh-Necho at Carchemish, on the Euphrates; for that event also took place in this fourth year of Jehoiakim. We learn from Berosus, as quoted by Josephus, that when Nebuchadnezzar was engaged in this expedition, and had already conquered the Egyptians, he received tidings that the throne of Babylon was made vacant by the death of his father. Upon this he hastened with his light troops across the desert to Babylon, leaving the body of his army to return by the ordinary route.

It is said, again, that the dates given in Jeremiah xxv. 1 and Dan. ii. 1 cannot be reconciled with each other. In the former of these the first year of Nebuchadnezzar is the fourth of

Jehoiakim, in which year, or at all events in the preceding year, Daniel with his three companions were taken captive. Yet after they have been transported to Babylon and received an education there extending through three years, we find Daniel interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream in the second year of his reign. To this it can be answered, in part, that in the Second Book of Kings and in Jeremiah, the years of Nebuchadnezzar are obviously reckoned from the time when he was placed by his father, who was now old and infirm, at the head of his army, the title of king being applied to him by way of anticipation. In the Book of Daniel, on the contrary, his years are reckoned from his actual accession to the throne. But even then it is necessary to assume a considerable delay between his return from his Egyptian expedition and his formal investiture with the kingdom. *The grounds of such a delay we can only conjecture. It may have been connected with the settlement of the affairs of the realm, which he found, Berosus tells us, administered by the Chaldeans, the kingdom being kept for him by the chief man among them; or the statement of Berosus may be wanting in fulness and accuracy. An argument from our ignorance cannot be urged against the authenticity of Daniel any more than in its favour.*

As to the acknowledged difficulties connected with the identification of Belshazzar and Darius the Median, it is sufficient to say that the notices which we have of the Chaldean monarchy after Nebuchadnezzar are so fragmentary and contradictory, that no valid argument can be drawn from such difficulties against the authenticity of the Book of Daniel.

An old opinion identifies Belshazzar with Nabonnedus, who was either a son of Nebuchadnezzar or a grandson, called his son in the sense of his descendant. But Rawlinson, informs us that, from inscriptions deciphered by him, it appears that the eldest son of Nabonnedus was called *Bel-shar-exer* = Belshazzar. He thinks that, as joint king with his father, he may have been governor of Babylon when the city was taken by the Medes and Persians, and have perished in the assault, while, in accordance with the statements

of Berosus, Nabonnedus himself survived. Upon either of the above suppositions Darius the Median will be Cyaxares II., son of Astyages and uncle to Cyrus, who succeeded to the title of king—"took the kingdom," though the conquest of Babylon was due to Cyrus himself, who not long afterwards ascended the thrones of the united kingdoms of Media and Persia. Another view makes Belshazzar the same as Evil-Merodach, son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar, and identifies Darius the Median with Astyages. It is not necessary to decide which, if either, of these two views is correct.

An argument has been drawn from the fact that Jesus, the son of Sirach, does not mention the name of Daniel in the catalogue of his worthies. Such negative arguments are at best weak; and this loses all its force from the circumstance that he omits others, as Ezra and Mordecai (the twelve minor prophets also, since chap. xlix. 10, is regarded as spurious).

The alleged linguistic difficulties have been reduced, so far as the date of the book is concerned, to three or four Greek names of musical instruments; all of which,—the instruments and their names,—may naturally enough have been brought from Greece, the home of musical art, in the way of ordinary commercial intercourse. We are not called upon to defend the classic purity of Daniel's style. A Hebrew, and educated at the court of Babylon, it was natural that his Chaldees should be coloured with Hebrew forms, and his Hebrew with Chaldaisms. The argument from the general style of the book is in favour of its genuineness, not against it.

The commendations bestowed upon Daniel are thought to be inconsistent with his being the author of the book. Some, who admit its authenticity and its right to a place in the sacred canon, having been led by this consideration to adopt the opinion that Daniel, though essentially the author of the book, did not himself put it into its present form; but that some one of his countrymen put together his prophecies, prefixing to them introductory notices respecting the author. So far as the canonical authority of the book is concerned, there are no serious objections to this hypothesis; but we may well ask

whether undue weight is not given to the objection under consideration. Throughout the whole book these commendatory notices are underlain by the idea that Daniel's wisdom is not his own, but is given him by God and for purposes connected with the welfare of the covenant people. By revealing to His servant secrets beyond the ken of all the wise men of Babylon, He manifests at once His own infinite perfections and the vanity of the Chaldean gods; and this Daniel records to the glory of the God of Israel.

The real objection to the book lies, as already intimated, in the supernatural character of its contents, in the remarkable miracles and prophecies which it records. The miracles of this book are of a very imposing character, especially adapted to strike the minds of the beholders with awe and wonder; but so are those also recorded in the beginning of the Book of Exodus. In both cases they were alike fitted to make upon the minds of the heathen, in whose presence they were performed, the impression of God's power to save and deliver in all possible circumstances. The prophecies are mostly in the form of dreams and visions; and they are in wonderful harmony with Daniel's position as a minister of State at the court of Babylon, and also with the relation of Judaism to the heathen world. In the providence of God, the history of His covenant people, and through them of the visible kingdom of heaven, had become inseparably connected with that of the great monarchies of the world. How appropriate, then, that God should reveal in its grand outlines, the course of these monarchies to the final and complete establishment of the kingdom of heaven! In all this we find nothing against the general analogy of prophecy, but everything in strict conformity with it.

E. P. BARROWS, D.D

The Preacher's Finger-Post.

**Subject: THE INCOMPARABLE-
NESS OF THE GREAT GOD.**

"Who hath measured the water in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counsellor hath taught Him? With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him knowledge, and showed to Him the way of understanding? Behold, then, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, He taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity.

To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto Him? The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved."—Isa. xl. 12-20.

The Bible is the grandest of all books, and this is one of its grandest chapters. The subject of the passage before us, including nine verses, is the *incomparableness of the great God*. "To whom then

will ye liken God?" The passage suggests—

I. That the greatest THINGS in the MATERIAL world are nothing to Him. The *ocean* is great, great in its depths, breadths, contents, occupying by far the largest portion of this globe of ours. But He "hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand." The *heaven* is great: its expanse is immeasurable, its worlds and systems baffle all arithmetic, but He "meted out the heaven with the span." The *earth* is great, great to us, though a mere speck in the universe and, it may be, an atom to other intelligences; but "He comprehended the dust in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance." What is the universe to God? You may compare an atom to the Andes, a rain-drop to the Atlantic, a spark to the central fires of the creation; but you cannot compare the universe, great as it is, to the Creator. "Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."

II. That the greatest MINDS

in the SPIRITUAL universe are nothing to Him. "Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord, or being His counsellor hath taught Him? With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him knowledge, and showed to Him the way of understanding?" The Bible gives us to understand that there is a spiritual universe far greater than the material, of which the material is but the dim mirror and feeble instrument—a universe containing intelligences innumerable in multitude and incalculable in their gradations of strength and intelligence. But what spirit or spirits at the head or hierarchy of these intelligences has ever given Him counsel, instructed or influenced Him in any matter? "Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord?" etc. He is *uninstructible*: the only Being in the universe who is so. He knows all—all that has been, all that is, all that is possible ever to be. Sooner speak of a spark enlightening the sun, than speak of a universe of intelligences adding aught to the knowledge of God. He is *absolutely original*: the only Being in the universe who is so. We talk of original thinkers. Such creatures are mere fictions. He being so *independent* of all minds:

First: *His universe must be regarded as the expression of Himself.* No other being had a hand in it.

Secondly: *His laws are the revelation of Himself.* No one counselled Him in His legislation.

Thirdly: *His conduct is absolutely irresponsible.* He is answerable to no one. He alone is irresponsible, and He alone can be *trusted* with *irresponsibility*.

III. That the greatest INSTITUTIONS in HUMAN SOCIETY are nothing to Him. Nations are the greatest things in human institutions. Nations, with their monarchs, courts, armies—Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome—these are great things in history. But "nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance." The greatest islands on which the greatest nations live, are to Him "as a very little thing." They have nothing to present to Him worthy of His acceptance. "Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations are before Him as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing and vanity." What were the greatest nations of the old world, or the most powerful of modern times; what are the greatest nations that have ever been, or are, compared to Him? Nothing, emptiness. How

absurd the expression frequently used in speeches of public men, "This great nation." How still more absurd and impious the language used in prayer, "Our illustrious sovereign!" O ye magnates of the world, ye kings of the earth, what are ye in the presence of God? Less than animacula dancing in the sun.

IV. That the greatest PRODUCTIONS of human LABOUR are nothing to Him. Perhaps in all ages the highest productions of human genius have been in connection with religion. Religion has had the finest architecture, carvings, sculpture, paintings, etc. But what are they to Him? "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto Him? The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation, chooseth a tree that will not rot, he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image that shall not be moved."

CONCLUSION: How great is God! Well might the Moslems cry in their prayers, *Allah, hiakbar!*—"God is great." "There is," said an eloquent French preacher, "nothing great but God."

"O God supreme, sole, all the gods to Thee

Restore their stolen titles; Thou alone
Hast true right to the names of
Diety.
First cause, and imperceptible
unseen;
If apprehended only by pure soul;
Source of all life, transcendent
and eterne;
Source of all measure, motion,
time, and change:
Who makest, movest, rulest all:
Thyself
Impossible, immovable, unmade,
The one great Spirit of the uni-
verse." *Festus.*

Subject: TRUE MORAL ARCHITECTURE.

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."—Jude 20, 21.

This Epistle of Jude is one of the seven epistles of the New Testament that are called catholic. They are addressed, not to any particular Church at any particular period or place, but to the universal Church in all places and periods. Jude styles himself, in the first verse, the servant of Jesus Christ and the brother of James: brother, we presume, to that James who held so conspicuous a place in the Church at Jerusalem, and wrote the epistle that bears his name. The remarkable agreement of this epistle with the second chapter of the Second Epistle of Peter, renders it probable that one writer was acquainted with the productions of the

other, or that they drew from some common source yet undiscovered. Its manifest design is, to guard all Christly men against the seductions of all false teachers, teachers corrupt in practice as well as doctrine, whose selfishness, sensuality, avarice, schismatic spirit, and vain glory he describes in vivid language of terrible denunciation. The text leads us to consider the Christly character as an architecture. "Building up yourselves," etc. And there are three subjects of thought suggested in relation to it.

I. THE ARCHITECT. Who is the architect? Circumstances, providence, ministers, God? All these have much to do with the building; and without God of course the building could never be erected. But SELF is the architect here referred to—"building up yourselves." Man *himself* in all cases is the former of his character. If it is a bad one, he alone must bear the blame and suffer the penalty. If a good one, he alone shall have the credit under God, and enjoy the reward. The redeeming God has furnished us with the foundation of a good character, the plan by which it is to be reared, the materials for its erection, and the strongest motives for setting to the work. But unless we ourselves build, the foundations, plans, materials, motives, are, so far as we are

concerned, utterly worthless. No hand can pile up the materials into a symmetrical, moral superstructure but our own. "Building up yourselves." This is a work that no one can do for us. Not parents, friends, priests, God Himself. Each man must do it for himself. Man is the architect of his own character.

First: The *moral constitution of the soul* shows this. Character is formed by thought; and man is evermore free in thought.

Secondly: The *testimony of conscience* proves this. Where the character is bad, conscience condemns the man and no one else; where it is good, conscience smiles its approbation.

Thirdly: The *word of God* reveals this. All the precepts and promises, the rewards and punishments contained in the Divine word imply the fact that man alone is responsible for his character.

II. THE FOUNDATION. What is the foundation? Prudential motives, natural ethics? No, "holy faith." "Building up yourselves on your most holy faith." Faith, here, does not mean the act of believing, but the *object* of faith, which is Christ. All character is based on some one central idea. Some characters are built on the *sensual* idea. "What shall we eat?" etc. This was the character of the prodigal son, Herod,

etc. Some on the *secular* idea. This was the character of the young lawyer, etc. Some on the *ambitious* idea. Such were the characters of the Hamans, Alexanders, and Napoleons. Some on the *Christian* idea, which means the supremacy of self-sacrificing loves manifested in Jesus Christ. This is the true idea. All true character is built on Christ. "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." He is the Rock on which the true Church is built. Christ is fundamental to all moral goodness in human nature. As a foundation, He is free to all, firm as omnipotence, lasting as immortality.*

III. THE METHOD. How is it to be done?

First: By *holy prayer*. "Praying in the Holy Ghost." "We know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the heart knoweth what is in the spirit, for He maketh intercession according to the will of God." To pray in the Holy Spirit, is to pray at His *dictation* and by His *direction*; it is to "pray without ceasing," for the essence of prayer is an abiding realization of dependence on God. No Christly

character can be got without this.

Secondly: By *abiding love*. "Keep yourselves in the love of God." In love for God, and in sympathy with that love He has shown you. To live in love, is to live in felicity, in freedom, and everlasting progress. Most men have at times some feeling of the love of God. But the love of God in us is only Christly as it becomes *paramount* and *permanent*.

Thirdly: By *glorious hope*. "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Mark the *object* of this hope—"the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ." Christ's mercy, how great is that! more free than the air, more boundless than the sea. This is the sustaining hope, the hope that nerves the soul to action. Mark the *end* of this hope—"unto eternal life." Eternal life is eternal goodness. All virtuous hope has its eye on eternal moral perfection.

CONCLUSION: Such, then, is a Christly character; it is a building in the variety of its materials, the unity of its design, and the function it fulfils. It is the residence of the soul. But it is a building that every man must erect for himself.

* See *Homilist*, Series III., vol. iii., page 146.

Subject: THE HIGHEST FORM OF HUMAN LIFE.

"Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."*—*PHIL. i. 11.*

This epistle reveals wonderful tenderness and depth of feeling in the mind of Paul. It is a mixture of love and joy—love for the converts, and joy at their spiritual welfare. It has been called the epistle of joy. It is comparatively free from all dogmatic teaching and apostolic reproofs. It breathes love and peace from beginning to end. The words we have selected as a text present to our view the *highest form of human life*. Different men lead different lives; some are sensual, some are mercenary, some are intellectual, some are pietistic. Some of these are worthless and pernicious, none of them reach the true ideal. The text suggests three ideas concerning this life.

I. It is a life **ABOUNDING WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS**. "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness."

First: "Fruits of righteousness," in relation to *men*. Practical deference to the rights of others, is a fruit of righteousness; practical compassion for the sufferings of others, is a

fruit of righteousness; practical benevolence for the well-being of others, is a fruit of righteousness. True social righteousness is something more than financially paying every man his due, something more than a non-interference with the rights and privileges of others: it is working for the happiness and elevation of all.

Secondly: "Fruits of righteousness," in relation to *God*. It means (1) gratitude for His kindness, (2) esteem for His excellence, (3) reverence for His greatness, (4) practical desire for the triumph of His truth and the realization of His plans. This is human life in the highest form. "Filled with the fruits of righteousness."

II. It is a life **PRODUCED BY JESUS CHRIST**. "Which are by Jesus Christ." Apart from Christ, there is none righteous, no not one. He is the great *moral rectifier*. His mission is to make men right—right in themselves, in their relations to society, the universe, and God. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." Man is justified,—i.e. made right—by Christ, and by no one else. "He came to establish judgment,"

* For remarks on these words, and the two preceding verses, see *Homilist*, Editor's Series, vol. ix., page 348.

—rectitude,—“on the earth.” No man is a Christian whatever the amount of his theological opinions, the orthodoxy of his faith, the fulness of his religious emotions, if he is not *righteous*—righteous in relation to man and in relation to God. Where there is not righteousness, religion is mere cant.

III. It is a life HONOURING to God. “Unto the glory and praise of God.” A human life filled with the “fruits of righteousness,” is a brighter

and fuller revelation of God than the whole material universe. It has in it (1) the glow of Divine love, (2) the radiance of Divine holiness, and (3) the unswerving regularity of Divine righteousness.

CONCLUSION: Brother, this is the life to live, the only life worth living, the only life that will not be a curse to us one day. Thank God that through Christ such a life we, —even the most ignorant and corrupt of us,—may live!

A WOMAN'S POWER ON HER HEAD BECAUSE OF THE ANGELS (1 Cor. xi. 10).—The word translated “power,” is perhaps a mere symbolic title of the veil itself. Nor is the figure altogether strange or unintelligible to an Oriental. The veil is in fact the beautiful lady's strength and defence. Modestly veiled, she appears anywhere and everywhere in perfect safety. She is held inviolate by a sensitive and most jealous public sentiment, and no man insults her but at the risk of being torn to pieces by an infuriated mob; but without the veil, she is a weak helpless thing, at the mercy of every brute who may choose to abuse her. The veil is therefore the virtuous woman's power, and whenever she appears in public she ought to have this power on her head. In church, “because of the angels”; i.e., the messengers and ministers, as I suppose. The women must be modestly veiled, because they are to sit in the presence and full view of the ministers—comparatively strangers to them, and many of them evangelists from foreign nations.—“THE LAND AND THE BOOK.”

Seeds of Sermons from the Minor Prophets.

If the Bible as a whole is inspired, it is of vast importance that all its Divine ideas should be brought to bear upon the living world of men. Though the pulpit is the organ Divinely intended for this work, it has been doing it hitherto in a miserably partial and restricted method. It selects isolated passages, and leaves whole chapters and books for the most part untouched. Its conduct to the Minor Prophets may be taken as a case in point. How seldom are they resorted to for texts! and yet they abound with splendid passages throbbing with Divine ideas. It is our purpose to go through this section of the Holy Word; selecting, however, only such verses in each chapter and book as seem the most suggestive of truths of the most vital interest and universal application.

Having passed rapidly through Hosea and Joel, two of the Minor Prophets, we come now to Amos. He, we are informed, was a native of Tekoa, a small region in the tribe of Judah, about twelve miles south-east of Jerusalem. Nothing is known of his parents. He evidently belonged to the humbler class of life, and pursued the occupation of the humble shepherd. From his flock he was divinely called to the high office of prophet; and though himself of the tribe of Judah, his mission was to Israel. He was sent to Bethel, into the kingdom of the ten tribes. He commenced his ministry in the reign of Uzziah, between 810 and 783 B.C., and therefore laboured about the same time as Hosea. In his time idolatry, with its concomitant evils and immoralities of every description, reigned with uncontrolled sway amongst the Israelites, and against these evils he hurled his denunciations. The book has been divided into three parts: "First, sentences pronounced against the Syrians, the Philistines, the Phoenicians, the Edomites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Jews, and the Israelites, chapters i. and ii. Second, special discourses delivered against Israel, chapters iii. to vi. Third, visions, partly of a consolatory and partly of a comminatory nature, in which reference is had both to the times that were to pass over the ten tribes previous to the coming of the Messiah, and to what was to take place under His reign, chapters vii. to ix. His style is marked by perspicuity, elegance, energy, and fulness. His images are mostly original, and taken from the natural scenery with which he was familiar.

No. XCVI.

Subject: HUMAN JOY IN THE UNSUBSTANTIAL.

"Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought, which say, Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength?"—Amos vi. 13.

"Horns" are signs and symbols of power; here they stand for the military resources with which they fancied that they could conquer every foe. "These delusions of God—forgetting pride the prophet cast down, by saying that Jehovah, the God of hosts, will raise up a nation against them, which will crush them down in the whole

length and breadth of the kingdom. This nation was Assyria."
—*Delitzsch*.

What these ancient Hebrews did, is an evil prevalent in all times and lands—rejoicing in the things of nought, taking pleasure in the unreal, the empty, and the fleeting.

I. To rejoice in **WORLDLY WEALTH**, is to "rejoice in a thing of nought." Rich men everywhere are always disposed to rejoice in their wealth. Houses, lands, and funded treasures, of these worldly men are ever boasting, in these they proudly exult. But what is earthly wealth? It is in truth, so far

as the possessor is concerned, "a thing of nought." It was not his a few years ago, and may not be his to-morrow. "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven." Wealth, at best, is a most unsubstantial thing: it is a mere air-bubble rising on the stream of life, glittering for a moment, and then departing for ever. Great fortunes are but bubbles: they vanish before a ripple on the stream or a gust in the atmosphere. "Wealth," says old Adams, "is like a bird; it hops all day from man to man as the bird from tree to tree, and none can say where it will roost or rest at night."

"Go, enter the mart where the merchantmen meet,
Get rich, and retire to some rural retreat :
Ere happiness comes, comes the season to die;
Quickly then will thy riches all vanish and fly.
Go, sit with the mighty in purple and gold;
Thy mansions be stately, thy treasures untold;
But soon shalt thou dwell in the damp house of clay,
While thy riches make wings to themselves and away."

II. To rejoice in PERSONAL BEAUTY, is to "rejoice in a thing of nought." Nature has endowed some with personal charms which it has denied to others—finely chiselled features, a radiant countenance, commanding brow, symmetrical form, majestic presence. He who is thus blest has many advantages: he commands admiration and exerts an influ-

ence upon human hearts. But is this beauty a thing to rejoice in? Those who possess it do rejoice in it; many pride themselves on their good looks and fine figures. But what is beauty? It is a "thing of nought." Why rejoice in that for which we can take no credit? Does the moss-rose deserve praise for unfolding more beauty and emitting more fragrance than the nettle? "Who can make one hair white or black, or add one cubit to his stature"? Why rejoice, too, in that which is so evanescent? Socrates called beauty "a short-lived tyranny," and Theophrastus, "a silent cheat." One old divine says it is like an almanac, it "lasts for one year as it were." Men are like the productions of the fields and the meadows: in the summer the variety is striking, some herbs and flowers appear in more stately form and attractive hues than others; but when old winter comes round, who sees the distinctions? Where are the plants of beauty? They are faded and gone. "All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof as the flower of the field."

"Beauty is but vain and doubtful good,
A shining glass that fadeth suddenly,
A flower that dies, when first it 'gins to bud;
A brittle glass that's broken presently:
A doubtful good, a gloss, a glass, a flower,
Lost, faded, broken, dead within an hour.
And as good lost is seldom or never found,
As fading gloss no rubbing will refresh,

As flowers dead lie withered on
the ground,
As broken glass no cement can
redress,
So beauty blemished once, for
ever's lost
In spite of physic, painting, pain,
and cost."

Shakespeare.

III. To rejoice in ANCESTRAL DISTINCTION, is to "rejoice in a thing of nought." There are those who are constantly exulting in their pedigree. Some who in this country can go back to the days of William the Conqueror, how delighted they are. But who were the men that William brought over with him, and between whom he divided this England of ours? Cobblers, tailors, smiths, plunderers, men of rapine and blood, most of them destitute alike of intellectual culture and morality. But even had we come from the loins of the intellectual and moral peers of the race, what in this is there for rejoicing? It is truly "a thing of nought." Our ancestry is independent of us, we are not responsible for it. It is not a matter either of blame or praise. Each man is complete in himself—an accountable unity, a moral cause. A prime minister has a number of earnest servile lacqueys—they are printers, jewellers, cloth makers, tailors, and such-like; in the zenith of his power he rewards them by causing them to be titled *Sir, Lord, Baron*, etc. In this their children rejoice. But is it not "a thing of nought"? What is there in it? Nothing.

"Knighthoods and honours borne
Without desert, are titles but of
scorn."

Shakespeare.

IV. To rejoice in MORAL MERITORIOUSNESS, is to "rejoice in a thing of nought." There are many who rejoice in their morality. Like the Pharisee in the Temple, they thank God they are not as "other men." They consider they are "rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing," whereas they are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Moral merit in a sinner, is a baseless vision, a phantom of a proud heart. The man exulting in his own self-righteousness, acts as foolishly as the man who endeavours to secure himself from the scorching rays of the sun under his own shadow. He seeks to bring his shadow between him and the sun, but cannot. If he run, the shadow is before him; if he fall down, the shadow falls with him and leaves him in contact with the burning beam. No, our righteousness is "a thing of nought": it is "filthy rags."

"Beware of too sublime a sense
Of your own worth and consequence.
The man who deems himself so
great,
And his importance of such
weight,
That all around, in all that's
done,
Must move and act for him alone.
Will learn in school of tribulation
The folly of his expectation."

Cowper.

CONCLUSION.—Ah me! how many on all hands are rejoicing in "a thing of nought." Wealth, beauty, ancestry, self-righteousness—what are these? Fleeting shadows, dying echoes. They are clouds without water; to the eye, they may for a minute

or two appear in gorgeous forms; but before a breeze they melt into thin air and are lost. Rejoice in the *real*, the spiritual, the eternal, the Divine.

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No. XC VII.

Subject: GOD CHASTISING NATIONS BY NATIONS.

"But, behold, I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, saith the Lord the God of hosts; and they shall afflict you from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of the wilderness."
—Amos vi. 14.

What "*nation*" is here referred to, as about being raised up by God against Israel? Undoubtedly, Assyria.

This Assyrian nation is here represented as overspreading the country, "from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of the wilderness." Hamath was a point of entrance for an invading army into Israel from the north which had just been subjugated by Jeroboam II. The boundaries are virtually the same as those mentioned (2 Kings xiv. 25) as restored to Israel by Jeroboam II., "from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain," i.e. the Dead Sea, into which the river of the wilderness here mentioned flows. Do not glory in your recently-acquired city, for it shall be the starting-point for the foe to afflict you. How sad the contrast to the feast of Solomon, attended by a congregation from the same Hamath, the most northern boundary of Israel, to the Nile, the river of Egypt, the most southern boundary! "Unto the river of the wilder-

ness," i.e. to Kedron, or that part of it which empties itself into the northern bay of the Dead Sea, below Jericho (2 Chron. xxviii. 15), which city was at the southern boundary of the ten tribes (*Maurer*). To the river Nile which skirts the Arabian wilderness and separates Egypt from Canaan (*Grotius*). If this verse includes Judah as well as Israel, *Grotius's* view is correct; and it agrees with 1 Kings viii. 65: "Solomon held a feast, and all Israel . . . from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt" (*Fausset*).

The subject suggested by the words is this—*God chastising nations by nations*. He now threatens to chastise the kingdoms of Judah and Israel by the Assyrian people. This is how the Almighty has acted from the beginning. He has chastised nations by nations. The history of the world is little else but a history of civil wars. Let us for a moment notice the how and the why of this.

I. The how. How does the Almighty bring about wars?

First: Not by His *inspiration*. The God of peace does not breathe into any people greed, ambition, revenge. These principles, from which all war emanates, are repugnant to His nature. He denounces them. His grand aim in the world is to annihilate them, and in their place germinate disinterestedness, humility, and magnanimous love.

Secondly: Not by His *authority*. All war is directly against His command; whilst everywhere He prohibits covetousness, pride, and ro-

venge, He inculcates, in almost every page of inspiration and every form of utterance, love to our neighbours. The God of peace works everywhere through the world through peace, works by the peaceful influences of nature and the love of the Gospel to produce "peace on earth, and goodwill towards men." How, then, can He be said to raise a nation to war? Simply by *permission*. He allows human nature freedom to work out the evil principles that are at work in it. The power of free action with which He endowed men at first, He does not crush, He does not restrict, He treats it with respect, and leaves men free to do evil as well as good. He who permits the river at times to overflow its boundaries, and the subterranean fires to break forth, permits the passions of men to break out in war and bloodshed. Permission is not authorship.

II. The *why*. Why does the Almighty chastise nations by wars? Why not employ the elements of nature, or angelic intelligences? or why not do it by His own direct volition, without any instrumentality whatever? He may, for aught we know, chastise men in all these ways; but we can see reasons for His employing nations to chastise nations by wars. In acting thus,—

First: Man has revealed to him in the most impressive way the *wickedness of the human heart*. It has been well said that war is the effect, the em-

bodiment, and manifestation of every conceivable sin. In every war hell is revealed: its fires flash, its thunders roll, its fiends revel and shriek. For man to get rid of sin, he must be impressed with its enormity; and does not war make that impression? Does not every crimson chapter in its history reveal to the human heart the stupendous enormity of sin?

Secondly: Man has revealed to him the *utter folly of putting confidence in his fellow-man*. War reveals falsehood, treachery, cunning, fraud, cruelty; and who can trust these? Does not war say to every man, "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm"? To-day a man may fondle you as a friend, to-morrow foam at you as a fiend. "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no hope."

Thirdly: Man has revealed to him the *supreme importance of cultivating the true friendship of his fellow-men*. What thoughtful men have not groaned and wept over the utter failure of all means to produce the results for which they were ostensibly commenced—to vindicate national honour, to establish peace? Such ends are never realized. What, then, is the lesson? Cultivate friendship with your fellow-men, the friendship of man with man, family with family, tribe with tribe, nation with nation. Wars are God's moral lessons to man in tragedy.

Scientific Facts used as Symbols.

"Books of Illustration" designed to help preachers, are somewhat, we think, too abounding. They are often made up to a great extent of anecdotes from the sentimental side of life, and not always having a healthful influence or historic foundation. We find that preachers and hearers are getting tired of such. Albeit illustrations are needed by every speaker who would interest the people, and are sanctioned by the highest authority. Nature itself is a parable. Hence we have arranged with a naturalist who has been engaged in scientific investigation for many years, to supply the *Homilet* with such reliable and well-ascertained facts in nature, as cultured and conscientious men may use with confidence, as mirrors of morals and diagrams of doctrines.

Variety in the Atmosphere: The Democratic Principle.

IN order that the air should be wholesome, it is necessary that it should not be of one kind, but the compound of several substances; and the more various the composition, to all appearances, the more salubrious. But it is chiefly by the predominance of some peculiar vapour that the air becomes unfit for human support, and a thousand accidents are found to increase these bodies of vapour. Heat may raise them in too great quantities, and cold may stagnate them. Minerals may give off their effluvia in such proportion as to keep all other kind of air away; vegetables may render the air unwholesome by their supply; and animal putrefaction seems to furnish a quantity of vapour at least as noxious as any of the former. All these united generally make up the mass of respiration, and are, when mixed together, harmless; but any one of them for a long time singly predominant becomes at length fatal.

The theory of the Philosophical Democrat is, that in order to have a perfect political constitution, you must have a proper representation of all classes of society. The political atmosphere is most healthy when composed of a variety of elements. We know that, in like manner, it is maintained that society is most safe and most healthy when on the one hand no one class is unfairly lessened in influence, and that because the objectionable qualities of each are balanced by the compensating ingredients of all, it is desirable to preserve to them severally their natural influence and scope and perfect freedom, to ensure vitalizing action.

The Difficulties of Root: Life Preserved by Struggling.

M LOUIS FIGUIER says that the manner in which roots succeed in overcoming obstacles has always been a subject of surprise to the observer. The roots of trees and shrubs, when cramped or hindered in their progress, have been observed to exhibit considerable mechanical force, throwing down walls or splitting rocks; and in other cases clinging together in bunches or spreading out their fibres over a prodigious space in order to follow the course of a rivulet with its friendly moisture. Who has not seen with admiration how roots will adapt themselves to the special circumstances of the soil, dividing their filaments, in a soil fit for them, almost to infinity, elsewhere abandoning a sterile soil to seek one further off which is favourable to them; and as the ground was wide or less hard, wet or dry, heavy or light, sandy or stony, varying their shapes accordingly.

You lament that your life is one constant struggle; that having obtained what you tried hard to secure, your whole strength is now required in order to retain it, and that your necessities impose on you the further obligation of additional exertions. It is so. But, do not repine; as a rule, the maintenance of life is everywhere conditional on struggling. It is not only so with men and animals, it is so even in the vegetable world. You struggle with obstacles; but the very trees have to do the same. Observe them, take heart, and grow strong!

GREAT PRAYER-MAKERS SOMETIMES IMMORAL.—The Moslems are afraid of any one who is especially given to prayers—their prayers, I mean. They have a proverb to this effect: "If your neighbour has made the pilgrimage to Mecca once, watch him; if twice, avoid his society; if three times, move into another street." And no one acquainted with the people will feel his confidence in an individual increased by the fact that he is particularly devout.—"THE LAND AND THE BOOK."

Homiletical Prebriaries.

No. CLXVI.

Subject : THE SOCIAL AGENCY OF GOOD MEN.

"Cast thy bread upon the waters : for thou shalt find it after many days."—ECCLES. xi. 1.

In the seventh volume of the present series of the *Homilist*, page 175, there is a very suggestive sketch on this text by the late lamented and talented Rev. Caleb Morris. We shall use the subject to illustrate the *social agency of good men*. All men, whatever their creed, character, or conduct, have a social agency. They exert an influence upon their circle, and, through that, upon wider spheres down through future times. "No man liveth unto himself." The text indicates the kind of agency that a thoroughly good man exerts upon his race. It is, I. DIVINELY TRUSTFUL. "Cast thy bread (corn) upon the waters." The allusion is to Egyptian agriculturists casting their seed from the boats into the overflowing waters of the Nile. Theirs was indeed a work of faith in the laws of nature. It would seem as if they were actually throwing away their property. Faith in God and His eternal laws is the mainspring in all the efforts of a good man's life. He does not work from selfish motives and for mercenary ends, but from faith in the Everlasting. His law is, not temporary expediency, but eternal right. He is ruled by principles, not by results. He looks, "not at the things that are temporal, but at those things that are eternal ;" he "walks, not by sight, but by faith." His agency is, II. EMINENTLY BENEFICENT. What he gives out, is not stones or chaff, but *bread, corn*, the life of the world. Like a seed, First : His every act has *life* in it. His every effort is an embodiment of a living conviction. The efforts of others are mere chaff. Secondly : His every act has *propagating power* in it. It is a seed that will germinate, grow, multiply. One really good act has proved the seed of millions of noble efforts. Thirdly : His every act has a *helpful* power in it. It supplies moral *bread* for the world. His agency is, III. INEVITABLY REMUNERATIVE. "Thou shalt find it after many days." The reward will not come at once. You cannot force moral vegetation. But, though slow, it will come. "Thou *shalt* find it." "A good

man," says Carlyle, "is ever a creative mystic centre of goodness. A good thing done 3000 years ago works now, and will work through all endless times and years." No good effort has ever been lost, or ever can be. It is a Divine incarnation, and more imperishable than the stars.

"Blessed art thou, O man! for thou growest
(O thou lord of the thought and the hand),
In the growth of whatever thou doest,
And the ages await thy command.

"No man's labour for good is in vain,
Though he win, not the crown, but the cross;
Every wish for man's good is a gain,
Every doubt of man's gain is a loss."

No. CLXVII.

Subject: A PICTURE OF DISEASED SOULS SEEKING RELIEF FROM INCOMPETENT DOCTORS.

"Had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse."—MARK v. 26.

This is a part of one of the miraculous narratives contained in the Gospels. It is given by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, each with some circumstantial variation; whilst the whole narrative is thrillingly interesting and profoundly suggestive. We shall fasten our attention at present only on the extract above. We take the condition of the woman who "rather grew worse" under the medical treatment she had received for twelve years, as a picture of morally diseased souls seeking relief from inefficient physicians. I. This woman "rather grew worse," although she tried "MANY PHYSICIANS." She had tried, no doubt, all the best doctors within her reach, and these, like practitioners generally, had experimented on her, and caused her to suffer "many things." When doctors cannot heal, they seldom fail to give pain. Souls conscious of moral disease, restless thoughts, pangs of conscience, terrible forebodings, often resort to inefficient healers. First: Some resort to *worldly amusement*. They seek to drown their fears and deaden their consciences in the gaieties of sensual pleasure and social recreations. Secondly: Some resort to *ceremonial* *hypnotism*. They yield themselves up to priestly directions and

influences. Thirdly: Some resort to *external reformation*. They abandon habits of outward immorality, and endeavour to pursue a course of conduct that is considered just, and even benevolent. These are some of the moral physicians that diseased souls apply to. II. This woman "rather grew worse," although she tried "many physicians," for MANY YEARS. A doctor who is not able to determine within a short period as to whether he can cure the patient or not, is unworthy of his profession. How common it is for medical practitioners to keep on their patients from year to year, even to the end of their life. Morally diseased souls must necessarily grow worse and worse the longer they continue under the physicians we have indicated. The longer they are doctored by worldly amusements, ceremonial religions, and external reformations, they grow worse rather than better. III. This woman "rather grew worse," although she "HAD SPENT ALL THAT SHE HAD" on her physicians. She felt, as all feel, health and life to be more valuable than gold; and willingly she bartered away all she had under the delusive hope of getting better. It will be a blessed day for men physically, should it ever dawn, when doctors shall only be paid for cures effected. A man who feels his soul diseased may attend to all the physicians we have indicated, spend all his money, and "rather grow worse" than better. What money men spend to relieve their souls, and spend in vain! Who, then, is the physician that can cure souls? He who now cured this poor woman. As soon as she touched the hem of His garment she had her "issue of blood stanchèd." He heals at once. A twelve years' malady He removed in one instant, and without the cost of a fraction. Haste to Him, ye sin-sick souls!

No. CLXVIII.

Subject: THE GOLDEN CALF, THE POPULAR RELIGION, AND THE TRUCULENT MINISTER.

"And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them

unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."—Exod. xxxii. 1-4.

The incident leads us to consider—I. The POPULAR RELIGION. People have always had and must always have a religion. The religious instinct is one of the strongest in human nature. Here the people of Israel cry out for gods. "Make us gods." The popular religion in this case displays characteristics which have marked it in all ages. It was—First: *Sensuous*. "Make us gods." They wanted something they could see, touch, and handle. Popular religion generally lives in the senses; it must have something it can hear, see, touch, taste, and smell. It was—Secondly: *Intolerant*. "Gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods." They gathered themselves together, raised, no doubt, their voice to the highest pitch, and intolerantly make a demand on this lonely man Aaron. Popular religion has ever been intolerant. It was—Thirdly: *Heartless*. "As for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." Here is a way to speak of the man who risked his all to break the iron rod of the oppressor and lead them out of cruel bondage. "This Moses." You can almost hear the sneering tone and see the snarling lip. The popular religion has always been heartless; it will martyr the best of men, it put the Son of God to death. It was—Fourthly: *Sacrificing*. "And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron." Popular religion has always been ready to make sacrifices. It will perform pilgrimages, prosecute crusades, build churches, support missionaries, and do anything to carry out its own morbid wishes and bigoted crotchets. Costly donations for religious objects often imply enormous sin. This incident leads us to consider—II. The TRUCULENT MINISTER. Aaron was their minister, divinely ordained too; and what did he do when they made this demand? Did he, in the name of common sense and God, stand up and expose the absurdity and denounce the impiety of their request? Alas! not he. "Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings." He should have said—Break off your stupid prejudices, you fools. "And he received them at their hand." And what did he do with them? Did he fling them into some river or sea, throw them at his feet and tread them in the dust? No. He

set to work, "and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf." That is, a figure like the ox they worshipped in Egypt—the idol called *Apis*. This man Aaron ministered to their impious *prejudices*, and formed a figure like the god whom their masters in Egypt had taught them to worship in childhood. Aaron in this case is a type of a large class of truculent ministers that are to be found in all ages, and that are to be found in England to-day. The congregations of the popular religion everywhere assemble together and demand that their ministers shall give them the golden calf, the old prejudices of their early days; and he must do it or they will leave him, and denounce him as heretic. Many a man, alas! goes into the pulpit with a sermon which is but a golden calf: it contains the prejudices of the people embodied in florid imagery, often in sensuous descriptions—in forms, in fact, which the people can see, and feel, and even smell. As a rule,—and the time has come to speak it out,—so corrupt is the popular religion of this country at the present, that it is only such truculent ministers that can get anything like a considerable gathering.

No. CLXIX.

Subject: THE CHOICE OF THE CROSS.

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," etc.—GAL. vi. 14.

We glory in the Cross. I. Because of the CHOICE which it reveals. Choice implies intelligence, liberty, and responsibility. II. Because of the FULFILLED OBLIGATIONS growing out of the choice. The choice of any great work involves an obligation to carry it through. Christ could say, "I have finished the work," etc. III. Because of THE END CHRIST HAD IN VIEW when He chose the Cross, and when He fulfilled the obligations which the choice involved. (1) To magnify the law of God. (2) To reveal the Fatherhood of God. (3) To reveal a method of salvation by faith. (4) To make salvation possible for all who hear the gospel.

W. HARRIS.

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

RECREATION.—If the word *recreation* implies that the time when labour is intermitted is the time when loss is repaired, and, as it were, the human being created anew, it is certainly true, if not of the body, of the mind and thoughts. The mind's riches are not stored up in hours of mental tension, but in hours of mental recreation. Labour is necessary to set in order and arrange the store of observations, images, intuitions; but it is only when the mind is quite at ease that the store increases. When the mind is quite at ease, when self-consciousness is suspended and care dozes, at such times we have an apprehension of things far more tenacious and more intimate than when the shadow of ourselves falls upon them. The important thing is, to paralyse the will and set in motion the involuntary part of the mind. If you can do this,—which, alas! you never can by trying,—it is as though a veil were withdrawn that had concealed the face of nature. In such moods, images and forms pass into the very substance of the mind. It becomes permanently enriched by additions which it can never lose, and which modify its very character. No other acquisitions that the mind can make are thus permanent. What we store up laboriously in the memory, is lost again: we have the usufruct of it for a certain time, but we have no property in it. The richness and the brightness

and the capacity of growth in a man's mind are in proportion to the number of images which have passed in this imperceptible, uninvited way into the substance of it; and, as I have said this only happens to a mind at rest. So that a man's intellectual wealth is in proportion, not to his work, but to his rest; and recreation (i.e., a creating anew) is an apt word. In a certain sense the activity of the mind diminishes its wealth. As long as the mind is intensely active upon one particular thing, it becomes dead to everything else, and so loses the wealth it might have gained in the same time if it had been at rest. If by an effort of will we fix our attention upon one thing, we keep all other things that might have attracted our attention at arm's length. The effects of this are serious in the case of a man who always and habitually keeps his mind on one thing or on a small number of things. Such men are very common. There is the man who, without great powers, has great ambition. Self-important and persevering, he determines to distinguish himself in some way; and he proceeds upon the principle, If so-and-so made his way, cannot I, with inferior powers, make my way too, by working twice as hard? He is encouraged in this notion by a number of platitudes and stories which are current, the moral of which is, that everything can be done by will, concentration, and per-

severance. Accordingly, he devotes himself night and day to some one study or pursuit; and dreams, sleeping or waking, of some one object of ambition. Now, a person suffering from this fever of purpose is a person permanently deprived of recreation. The wear and tear of his mind ceases to be repaired by influences from without; irritated by the perpetual goading of his sleepless purpose, he cannot throw his mind unto a passive attitude; he is eternally pre-occupied; whatever roving influences are in the air around him—chance fancies that might make the very blood of his soul richer, happy intuitions ready to become his, which might give him a new life—nothing can cling to the marble surface of a soul petrified by the monomania of purpose; he sacrifices the wealth that lies ready at his hand, for that which lies far off; he cannot be still, look around him, and enjoy, but is always staring at the horizon, foregoing the present for the future, bartering modest enjoyments for morbid wishes. This state of mind leads to what may be called a starvation of character. A soul in which the will is *perpetually* on the stretch, and all the receptive power *perpetually* in abeyance, is like a body which is always exercised and never fed; the end is exhaustion and starvation. The extreme case of this is the miser; but less extreme cases, that are still sufficiently ghastly, may be found, where the soul has been starved through the want of "a wise passiveness," through the want of recreation. People of this kind are often success-

ful in attaining the object for which they sacrifice everything, as the miser does generally succeed in making money. The world has often owed much to them, and they are at least more respectable than the mere idler. In the soul as in the body, it is better to die of starvation than of gluttony. Moreover, we must distinguish the different kinds of concentration. That concentration which I have described as a disease, an atrophy of the soul, is quite a different thing, for example, from the devoted concentration of the artist, who is concentrated, not because he has lost the power of resting or recreating himself, but because to him the fullest recreation comes from the same pursuit which affords him work. As Thackeray says, "he has his task, and he never tires of it." I have called it a current platitude, that all greatness has been achieved by hard work. Certainly it has seldom been achieved without some hard work; but the supreme quality of great men is the power of resting. Anxiety, restlessness, fretting, are marks of weakness; all mighty action, all triumphant energy, rests upon a fundamental happiness, an habitual repose. The power of playing, of relaxing, of unbending, is the secret both of energy and of endurance, because play is food, because relaxation is recreation. And with more ordinary people, it is this power of resting that makes the difference between an interesting and common-place person. With the *working* man you must talk upon his own subject; on all other subjects he is dumb; he never says anything

that surprises you, or anything that excites your curiosity; and even on his own subject, if you happen to know the books he has read, you know precisely what he thinks, and can predict infallibly what he will say. But the resting man has depths in his mind not so easily sounded; you cannot calculate all that has been left there by his unconscious cerebration. He knows more than he has been taught, more than he has read: he has not only the truths that he has found, but the truths that have found him. The universe

and he are upon confidential terms; because he admires it, it reveals itself to him. He has found Faunus lying asleep in the noon-day; he has caught Proteus in his cavern; he has surprised Diana at the fountain.

"He knows the rocks which angels
haunt;
Upon the mountains visitant
He hath kenned them taking wing,
And into caves where fairies sing
He hath entered, and been told
By voices how men lived of old."
J. R. SMITH.

THE EAGLE STIRRETH UP HER NEST (Deut. xxxii. 11, 12).—Do you suppose that the parent eagle literally beareth her young on her wings? It is not necessary to press every poetical figure into strict prosaic accuracy. The notion, however, appears to have been prevalent among the ancients, that the eagle did actually take up her yet timid young and carry them forth to teach them how, and embolden them to try their own pinions. To this idea Moses seems to refer in Exod. xix. 4: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagle's wings and brought you unto Myself." The fact is not impossible; the eagle is not strong enough to do it; but I am not aware that such a thing has ever been witnessed. I myself, however, have seen the old eagle fly round and round the nest, and back and forth past it, while the young ones fluttered and shivered on the edge, as if eager but afraid to launch forth from the giddy precipice. And no wonder, for the nest is "on high," and a fall from thence would end their flight for ever.—
"THE LANE AND THE BOOK."

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH UNDER THE ROMAN EMPIRE, A.D. 80-476.
By Rev. A. D. CREEKE, B. A. London: Rivingtons.

The Preface informs us that this book is "an attempt to render the history of the early Church interesting to the general reader, and to bring it within the comprehension of the young Churchman, for whom manuals intended for the theological student possess little or no interest." This work is divided into twenty-three chapters, the subjects of which are, "The Church of the Apostles; The Latter Days of St. John; Christianity under Trajan; Christianity under Hadrian and the Antonines; From the Accession of Commodus to the Death of Severus; From the Accession of Caracalla and Geta to the Death of Decius; The Days of St. Cyprian and the Valerian Persecution; From Valerian to Diocletian; The Great Tenth Persecution; Constantine and Maxentius; Early Christian Worship and Ritual; From the Accession of Constantine to the Council of Nicea; From the Council of Nicea to the Death of Constantine; The Sons of Constantine; Julian the Apostate; From the Death of Julian to the Accession of Theodosius; From the Accession of Theodosius to the Conversion of St. Augustine; From the Conversion of St. Augustine to the Death of Theodosius; From the Death of Theodosius to the Sack of Rome by Alaric; From the Death of Arcadius to the Death of St. Augustine; The Council of Ephesus and the Nestorian Controversy; From the Council of Ephesus to the Lactrocinian; The Council of Chalcedon and the Eutyehian Controversy; The Fall of the Western Empire." This is truly a most invaluable compendium of Church History. Though very condensed, it is clear, comprehensive, embracing all the leading facts and epochs; and although written by a Churchman, its spirit is fair and catholic.

SACRED LYRICS. By HENRY LOCKWOOD. London: Kerby, Oxford Street.

The subjects of these Lyrics are: "David's Lament, Deborah's Song, The Song of Solomon, The War Horse, The Prayer of Moses, Hagar and Ishmael, The Lament of Jeremiah, Jacob's Vision, The Curse of Idumea, The Call of Samuel, Elijah and The Widow's Son, the Captives of Babylon, The Burden of Babylon, Psalm xxiii., Isaiah's Vision of the Lord, The Valley of Bones, Belshazzar's Feast, The Restoration of Zion, The Sufferings of Christ, The Joyful Flourishing of Christ's Kingdom, The Vision of The Throne in Heaven." Most of these poems are good; some, in their tunefulness, imagery, sentiments, and expressions, of a very high order.

THE TEMPLE, ITS MINISTRY AND SERVICES AT THE TIME OF JESUS CHRIST. By Rev. Dr. EDELSHEIM.

THE TRADES AND INDUSTRIAL OCCUPATIONS OF THE BIBLE. By W. G. LEWIS.

THE HOME CIRCLE: A RECORD OF BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, AND DEATHS.

THE SCRIPTURE POCKET BOOK FOR 1875.

THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S POCKET BOOK FOR 1875. The Religious Tract Society, Paternoster Row.

This is the smallest and poorest annual parcel that we have received from the Religious Tract Society for many years. We trust that excellent Institution is not smitten with unfruitfulness.

THE TEMPLE is a valuable little work. The author says his object in it is to show the reader Jerusalem as it was when our Lord passed through its streets, and the Sanctuary when He taught in its porches and courts; to portray, not only the appearance and structure of the Temple, but to describe its audiences and worshippers, the ministry of its priesthood and the ritual of its services. This is an important work, and he has done it with much good sense and intelligence, crowding his pages with suggestive and sanctifying information.

THE TRADES AND INDUSTRIAL OCCUPATIONS OF THE BIBLE, is a book founded on a good conception. Some thirty trades and occupations are here sketched, not with any great ability, but in a somewhat dull and prosy style. We certainly should like to have had such a good idea wrought out in a more masterly way, with fine artistic illustrations and practical suggestions of the higher class.

THE HOME CIRCLE is an elegant little memorandum book, with text for every day in the year.

THE SCRIPTURE POCKET BOOK is after the usual type; so also is the YOUNG PEOPLE'S.

CHATTERBOX FOR 1874. Edited by the Rev. ERSKINE CLARK.

SUNDAY READING FOR THE YOUNG, 1874.

THE CHILDREN'S PRIZE FOR 1874. London: Wells Gardener, Paternoster Row.

Here are three annual volumes for children from our dear old friend, Rev. Erskine Clark. He is laying the children of England, as well as parents, under enormous obligations on account of his constant contributions to promote in the young mind of the age the pure morality and spiritual religion of the New Testament. CHATTERBOX is as good as ever; so also is SUNDAY READING; and the CHILDREN'S PRIZE is equal to both.

JOHN THE BAPTIST: THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION LECTURE FOR 1874.

By HENRY ROBERT REYNOLDS, D.D. London: Hodder & Stoughton, Paternoster Row.

This volume contains eight lectures, the subjects of which are "The Significance and Sources of the Biography of John the Baptist; Examina-

tion of the Biblical Record of the Nativity of John the Baptist ; John the exponent of the Old Testament dispensation ; The Preaching in the Wilderness ; The Transitional Work of John ; The Latter Ministry and Special Revelations of the Baptist ; The Ministry of the Prison ; Results, Echoes, and Lessons of the Ministry of John the Baptist." Each lecture embraces a large variety of interesting and important topics—topics which no one but an author of large reading, intellectual grasp, philosophic discernment, and logical tact could possibly have brought under such general headings and in connection with the biography of John the Baptist. The book is just what those who know something of the intellectual and moral properties of the author's mind would have expected. There is no attempt to startle the intellect by novelties, or to charm the imagination by rhetoric flashes. There is none of the dash, the rattle, or the foam of the cascade ; but the calmness, the force, and translucence of the deep and resistless river. Why the work is divided into "Lectures," since they are not discourses either read or pronounced (as the word implies), we know not, nor do we care, so long as we possess it. Neither Professor Rogers, his immediate and talented predecessor in this "Congregational Union" work, nor himself, seem to have delivered, either by reading or by the use of extemporaneous speech, their discourses to any assembly of men. Albeit men who write such discourses as these and send them out to the world through the press, without showing their face or sounding their voice before any audience, exert a wider, deeper, and more lasting influence than any of the scores of popular men who are constantly hooting and attitudinizing at our Exeter Halls and other places to which the thoughtless crowds resort. The greatest thinkers of the age, disgusted with popular oratory, are seldom seen on public platforms. "No mortal," says Carlyle, "has a right to wag his tongue without saying something ; he knows not what mischief he does, past computation, scattering words without meaning." Ah ! if all who thus "wag" their tongues were to absent themselves from our pulpits and platforms, we might then have men of the true type to address our public assemblies.

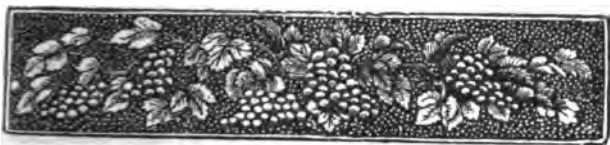
BIBLICAL EXPOSITIONS ; OR, BRIEF ESSAYS ON OBSCURE OR MISREAD SCRIPTURES. By SAMUEL COX. London : Hodder & Stoughton, Paternoster Row.

Those who have read a former work of the author's, entitled, "An Expositor's Note Book,"—to which we some time ago called the attention of our readers,—will know what to expect in this volume. In the Preface Mr. Cox assures us this is very much what the first was, viz., an exposition of obscure and misread passages selected from various parts of the Bible. This volume numbers twenty-eight brief and suggestive exegetical discourses. The subjects are, "The Sceptical Pawn ; The Shepherd's Shepherd ; Man's Life Ordered by God ; The Sea and the

Sanctuary; Freedom by Obedience; Ordinances and Obedience; The Secret of Constancy in Christian Work; The Elegy on Shellum; A Christmas Homily; The Reed and the Wind; Blind Bartimaeus' Echoes of the Gospel in Nature; The Parable of the Unjust Steward; Making Friends of Mammon; The Conversion of Nathanael; Freedom by the Truth; Divine Sympathy and Help; The Day of Pentecost; The Use of Leisure a Test of Character; The Christian Name; Grace before Meat; The Revelation of God in Christ; God a Consuming Fire; Great Reverses a Test of Character; The Story and Moral of a Blade of Grass; Christian Merriment; Brotherly Love and Unity; The Crown of Life." In all sincerity we recommend this volume to the perusal of our readers. It is an able, enlightened, suggestive, and catholic exposition of many striking passages in the sacred book.

THE IMAGE OF CHRIST, AS PRESENTED IN SCRIPTURE. By J. VAN OOSTERZEE, D.D. TRANSLATED FROM THE DUTCH BY MAURICE EVANS, B.A. London; Hodder & Stoughton.

This volume is a sequel to, and an embodiment of, the results of the author's two volumes on the Christology of the Old Testament and the New. The following extract from the author's pen will give our readers an idea of the nature and importance of the work. "As regards the authority of Scripture, if there is really such a manifest agreement in the prophetic and apostolic testimonies concerning Christ as we have again and again shown to exist, then precisely this agreement is, in our estimation, the great proof that the Bible is something infinitely more than that which so many will now make of it—a merely human book. How should such a glorious harmony be conceivable as we have observed between the Old Testament and the New, between Jesus and the Apostles, between Apostles and fellow-Apostles, if the Scripture were no document of extraordinary revelations of God, written under the special guidance of the Holy Spirit? As Scripture, read in simplicity, shows us Christ in all His fulness, so does Christ, once known aright, in turn lead us back to Scripture and give testimony to its truth and value." The work is in fact another "Life of Christ," not indeed so elaborate and complete as that of Dr. Farrar, but displaying a scholarship, a freshness and vigour of thought, a literary power, and a catholicity of spirit not inferior to his.



A HOMILY

ON

The Death-proof.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death."—JOHN viii. 51.

THESE words were not uttered hastily, or without due thought. They express a truth which we meet in other passages, and therefore a truth to which Jesus must have attached more than ordinary importance. If He had not been sure about it, or if He had deemed a knowledge of it of little or no consequence, He would at least have avoided the repetition of it. He did not give expression to it in the hope that it would escape notice. So far from that, He was evidently anxious that it should be attended to, understood, remembered, pondered, and believed. This solemn preface, "Verily, verily," corresponds to twice ringing a bell; and if His Jewish hearers did not bestow *special* attention on what followed, they were unquestionably to blame, and were themselves the losers. The form in which He put the

thought embodied in this language was admirably calculated to awaken interest, and shows the intensity of Christ's desire that the persons addressed should keep His *saying*, or rather His *word*. "Saying," is an unfortunate—a sort of diluted rendering. "Word," is decidedly preferable, for it gives us the cream as well as the milk. It must have been the wish of their hearts that they should not see death. Well, Jesus pointed out to them how they could secure, not mere existence, but life, and an endless continuance of life. "If a man keep my word, he shall never see death." The matter was, so to speak, in their own hands. There was nothing to hinder any of them from keeping Christ's word. It was before them—in their ears; and it was for them either to keep it as something worthy of being treasured up in the heart and jealously guarded, or cast it from them as they would the offer of a live coal or scorpion. They were free agents and might do either the one or the other. If Jesus had not thought so, it is inconceivable that He should have spoken thus to them—"If a man," etc. One was as truly free as another. His word was for all alike, and as they dealt with it so would they be treated in turn. The reception and retention of it would render them death-proof—would issue in life, and ever more and more life; but the rejection of it would have just the opposite effect. It is implied, that if any of them should be so infatuated as not to concern themselves about His word, as not to believe it and submit themselves to its proper influence, they would see death, and nothing but death. The phrase, "a man," is characteristic, and most encouraging. Realizing that He was the world's Saviour—no class or partial Saviour—it came natural to Jesus to employ it, and in presence of it we should suppress all such questions as—Is it possible for us not to see death? and, Is it the desire of Jesus that, instead of seeing

death, we should live for ever? Of course it is. We may be what we like, and may have done I care not what; but if we keep Christ's word we are assured that we shall never see death. What, then, shall we see? Life, and life only. "If a man," etc.; and for us to seek to clip and pare the phrase, "a man," is a pure impertinence, to say nothing of the criminality of the act.

In one sense it is not, perhaps, to be wondered at that the Jews should have been led to ask Jesus,—“Whom makest Thou Thyself?” It is undeniable that He humbled Himself and yet did not humble Himself. Simon Magus “gave out that himself was some great one.” Jesus of Nazareth did the same; but the difference between them is this—Simon Magus had no right to give out that he was a great man, whereas Jesus had every right. He was more than a great Man; He was “the Lord from heaven,” and “the Prince of Life;” and had He not taught men to think of Him accordingly, He would have been chargeable with bearing false witness, or hiding the truth about Himself. The claims which He put forth were extraordinary—could not have been higher than they were; but they were none too high. He set Himself on the very pinnacle of being. He spoke of Himself as greater than Jonas and Solomon. He did not hesitate to put Himself above Moses and Abraham. He identified His word with God's word. He tells us that He got His instructions from the Father, and that He was guided by them. The words He spoke were the Father's. At the same time they were His own; and what a value He must have attached to His word before He could bring Himself solemnly and unostentatiously to say, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep My word,” etc.!

To those who kept his statutes, Moses promised long life and abundance of temporal blessings; but Christ's promise to those who keep His word goes higher and

deeper. He promises that "they shall never see death." Keeping Christ's word,—mean what it may,—is "the one thing needful," for it results in an immortality of blessedness. "If a man keep my word," etc., and it has been well observed that keeping Christ's word "includes the whole obedience of faith, from its first admission to its full confirmation."

I can imagine this utterance, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man," etc., sounding to some persons like—"If a man perform an impossibility, he shall never see death." There is danger of allowing the notion to enter the mind, that the keeping of Christ's word is an utter impossibility, and in this way spoiling the passage. To do this, however, involves serious reflections on Jesus Himself. Assume that Christ's word cannot be kept, and that no one knew this better or so well as Jesus Himself, and what follows? This follows: for Jesus to talk in this style to the Jews, was neither more nor less than to mock them. But is this a position which can be maintained? Alas for us! if it could, for it would not be any longer true that Jesus was the friend of sinners, or that He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." The evangelists are delightfully communicative with regard to Jesus; but they never represent Him as indulging in mockery of those among whom He laboured as a religious Teacher. He was throughout His public ministry characteristically meek and lowly, kind and sincere. To make those with whom He came into contact happy, by putting them in possession of the truth and restoring them to holiness, was the one grand aim of which He never lost sight for a single moment. He was the quintessence of moral courage and faithfulness; but when He could not do others good, He was careful not to do them harm. Unnecessary pain He never caused man, woman, or child; and confidently may it be affirmed

that He was incapable of mocking an audience, large or small. No one can lay His finger on any statement made by Jesus and prove that it was mockingly uttered; and so far as the text is concerned, what is there to indicate that it was spoken in a mocking spirit? Nothing whatever. Had Jesus believed that sinners had not power to keep His word—no more power to do so than they had to stay the sun from rising and setting, or the sea from flowing and ebbing, He would never, with every appearance of earnestness and goodwill, have said,—“Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man,” etc. He must consequently have regarded the keeping of His word as not merely possible, but universally possible, and if universally possible, how far are we justified in associating even great difficulty with the keeping of it? In the Lord’s prayer preserved to us in the seventeenth chapter of John’s gospel, those who had been given to Christ out of the world get credit for having kept God’s word, which is Christ’s word. “I have manifested Thy name, . . . and they have kept Thy word;” and if they had kept the Divine word, it must be a grave mistake to suppose that keeping it ranks among the things that are not possible. We may fail to keep it; too many do; but on the Judgment Day none of us who are found not to have kept the word of Christ will be able to make out that it was beyond our ability to keep it. To wish and strive to keep it, is to succeed. God by His Spirit can enable us to keep it; and until we have done our best to keep it, and not succeeded, we should beware of thinking or saying that to keep it is an impossibility. Christ being witness,—and whose testimony, if not His, should have weight with us?—all can keep His word. Yes, and keeping it is *the condition* which they must supply who would fain not see death.

If a farmer were authoritatively informed that the

ground which he had prepared for it would throw out the seed cast into it, he would not sow it broadcast. It would at once occur to him that to sow seed in these circumstances would be to lose it. It might keep it, and no harvest follow. Sowing is not always rewarded with a harvest; but it is a law of nature that sowing precedes reaping. To reap we must sow personally, or others must sow for us; and the fields sown must retain the seed committed to them. Keeping it is essential to germination and growth; and keeping the word of Christ is every whit as essential to fruit unto holiness and life. Keeping is more than receiving. It is *prolonged* receiving; and the word of Jesus, retained in the mind, produces a desire to keep His commandments in act. It does more—it leads to earnest efforts to keep them in act; and these efforts are attended with more or less success. They are attended with an increasing measure of success; and the ultimate issue of keeping the word of Christ is a fully developed holiness. Now surely if we can receive the word of Christ, we can keep it; and it will hardly be denied that it can be received. It seems to me that keeping it must be easier than receiving it; and the motive to retain it after we receive it could not be stronger than it is. What comes of keeping it? Life everlasting comes of it; and who can conceive of anything grander than everlasting life? The greatest and most precious of all God's promises is the promise referred to in these words of the Apostle John: "And this is the promise which He hath promised us—eternal life;" and its fulfilment is sure to all who, in addition to receiving the word of Christ, keep it, in spite of all that may be done to fitch it from them. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man," etc. Jesus lays stress on keeping His word; and this should teach us to emphasize keeping it. They commit a mistake who think that receiving it is enough, or that

once in the heart it is certain to remain in it. Keeping it is as much a voluntary act as receiving it, and nothing less suffices to ward off death, and obtain for us life, everlasting life. It is not peculiar to some of those who keep Christ's word, that they do not see death. It is the privilege of them all without exception. "If a man keep my word," etc.

It is not meant by this, that the keepers of Christ's word, as a class, *enjoy exemption from temporal death*. As a matter of fact, they do not, and never have, in any age or country, or under any dispensation. "It is appointed unto men,"—apart altogether from their relation to Christ and their own character,—“once to die;” and all attempts to frustrate this divine decree must end in failure. There are but two cases of translation recorded in Scripture, those of Enoch and Elijah, and they are useful as showing that death is not the master but the servant of God. Human beings die, not of necessity, but because it is the will of God that they should. It is His hand that forms them, and His hand that “changes their countenance, and sends them away.” “*Thou* turnest man to destruction (dust), and sayest, Return, ye children of men.” The Psalmist certifies us that “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” This implies that saints die as well as sinners; and however strongly we may be tempted to conclude that it would be better that they did not, we should not yield to the temptation. God knows best. Jesus was “tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.” Nevertheless, He tasted death; and death did not come upon Him as a surprise. He foresaw His own death, for He again and again predicted it. The Apostles were keepers of Christ's word. Nevertheless, they went the way of all the earth. Each in his turn passed into “the land of the hereafter,” or dropped the body, and ascended to be “for ever with the

Lord." When, then, Jesus, with calm seriousness, gave utterance to this startling declaration—"Verily, verily, I say unto you," etc., He could not mean that those who received and kept His word would not see, in the sense of experiencing, temporal death. If this was what He did mean, the conclusion is inevitable that He was mistaken; and if He was mistaken in one thing, He may have been mistaken in a thousand things. Neither faith in Christ nor the closest following of Him raises us above the law of mortality. Keeping Christ's word draws after it a bright train of blessings, but exemption from temporal death is not one of them; and Jesus must have known that His disciples would die like other people. How could He be ignorant of the fact? Did none of His followers, during the three years that He exercised His public ministry, fall sick and die? How did the sickness, *e.g.*, of Lazarus of Bethany terminate? In death and burial; so that Christ's presence in this world was not a protection against the thick-flying and sure-hitting shafts of the insatiable archer—Death.

But how are we to account for Jesus, in His yearning desire to save the Jews, saying, "If a man keep my word, he shall never see death"?

There are two ways of accounting for what we find asserted here:—

I. Temporal death is a *very different thing* to those who keep Christ's word, from what it is to those who spurn it. The bodily suffering of Christians may be as acute and protracted as that of unsaved sinners; but in other respects death is different. It is to them vastly more of a friend than an enemy. For them to depart is to be with Christ, and to be with Christ is "far better" than to live on earth in the most prosperous circumstances. That Apostle to whom to live was Christ comforted himself in the prospect of death with the belief that for him to die would

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be "gain." To the unconverted death is loss—tremendous loss; but when the children of God go hence, they go home; and we express this conviction by speaking of death in their cases as a "happy change." They escape out of the gloom of earth into the glory of heaven, and, persuaded that it is a change of this kind, death comes to them armed with a blunted or broken dart, and they can challenge the grave in these terms, "O grave, where is thy victory?" Relative to them, death is a name, a shadow; and it is with them,—to avail myself of another's comparison,—as it is with those who walk towards the sun, the shadow is behind them. Of them alone it is true—

"That the happiest year they know,
Is the last, which leads them home."

II. "*The death of the body is not reckoned as death, any more than the life of the body is life*, in our Lord's discourses." So Dean Alford remarks; and it appears to me that there is truth in the observation. It is spiritual life running on into eternal life, that is life worthy of the name; and it is spiritual death running on into eternal death, that is death worthy of the name; and if so, it is no wonder that Jesus should have declared that, "if a man keep His word, he shall never see death." The wonder would have been if He had not used these very words, or words of the same import. He had no choice but to describe keeping His word, which is explained as "endurance in and obedience of faith," as issuing in true life, and life which neither knows nor can know interruption. He had no choice but to set himself forth as a complete contrast to him who, in verse 44, is characterized as "a murderer from the beginning"—the devil. By leading us into sin, the devil deprives the soul of life; but when we receive and keep the word of Christ, life immortal is restored to our souls. The icy touch of death arrests the flow of the

bodily life, as we are in the habit of naming it, but only for a time. There is a resurrection in store for the race. Mortality is to be "swallowed up of life." "In Christ all shall be made alive;" and, whatever resurrection may be to the finally impenitent, it will be a boon to all who in this probation state receive and keep Christ's word. The destiny of their bodies is, to be raised up at the last day, never more to fall a prey to disease and death; but the chilling hand of death, stretched to the utmost, reaches not to the soul's hidden life. With Christ for its source, it flows on, unlessened, undisturbed. "Because I live, ye shall live also." In place of being injuriously affected by the dying that takes effect on the body, it is affected by transference to heaven much as frost-bound streams are affected when they are acted on by a genial and continuous thaw. Where will spiritual life flourish, if not in heaven, where dwell God and His angels? And spiritual life is too congenial and dear to God for Him ever to address to it a "Hitherto and no further." Its eternity, if the eternity of any thing be, is "according to His will;" and when Jesus realized its everlastingness, its preciousness, and its beauty, He ignored temporal death as no death at all, and let it go forth, that if a man kept His word, he never would see death. He it is, therefore, who "hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel;" and till the text is torn from the chapter in which it has a place, we can afford to give no heed to those who lend themselves to the propagation of such heresies as the soul's materiality and annihilation.

We have neither seen Christ's shape nor heard His voice. This is the less to be regretted that there were those who saw the one and heard the other, and who, under the guidance of the Spirit, have furnished us with brief biographies, but biographies of remarkable simplicity and suggestiveness. Among them they tell to excellent

purpose the story of His life; they tell what He was in point of nature and character, what He did, and what His teaching was on moral and religious subjects—those subjects which take precedence of all others. Have we then given our attention to the Old Testament, especially its Messianic portions; to the New Testament, especially the four gospels? Have we received Christ's teaching in its substance? Are we occupied in keeping the word of Him whom John designates "the Word," because in Him we have the highest expression of the Divine mind and heart? If so, we are to be congratulated on our prospects. Let us hold it the longer, the firmer, and we shall never feel or see death. We shall find, when temporal death o'ertakes us, that it is stingless, that it is a low, dark, pointed gothic door into a palace which is also a sanctuary—that place where life flows on eternally in unpolluted purity and uncloying sweetness.

G. CRON.

Belfast.

EVILS OF COVETOUSNESS.—The desire for money is the root of all evil; and they that lust after it pierce themselves through with sorrows. Hippocrates, therefore, in his epistle to Crateva, an herbalist, gives him this good council, that if it were possible, amongst other herbs, he should cut up that weed covetousness by the roots, that there be no remainder left; "and then know this for a certainty, that together with their bodies, thou mayest quickly cure all the diseases of their minds." For it is indeed the pattern, image, epitome, of all melancholy, the fountain of many miseries, much discontented care and woe—this "inordinate or immoderate desire of gain, to get or keep money," as Bonaventure defines it, or, as Austin describes it, a madness of the soul; Gregory, a torture; Chrysostom, an insatiable drunkenness; Cyprian, blindness, *specierum supplicium*, a plague subverting kingdoms, families, an incurable disease; Budæus, an ill habit, "yielding to no remedies." Neither Esculapius nor Plutus can cure them. A continual plague, saith Solomon, and vexation of spirit, another hell.—R. BURTON.

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Psalms.

Our Purpose.—Many learned and devout men have gone philologically through this *TANAKH*, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal hermeneutics of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough HOMILETIC treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

Our Method.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1) The HISTORY of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2) ANNOTATIONS of the passage. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase, or allusion that may occur.—(3) The ARGUMENT of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is amongst the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4) The HOMILETICS of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavour so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately deduced, as to suggest such thoughts, and indicate such sermonizing methods, as may promote the proficiency of modern pulpit ministrations.

Subject: A Unique King.

"My heart is inditing a good matter :
I speak of the things which I have made touching the king :
My tongue is the pen of a ready writer," etc.

PSALM xlv. 1-17.

HISTORY.—Who knows the man that composed this psalm, or can give any certain information concerning the circumstances that originated it? One. All inquiry into its authorship has proved fruitless, all speculation on the subject is useless. It is not known whether the author was an inspired saint or not, or whether what he describes had an historic existence, or that only which his imagination created.

ANNOTATIONS.—"To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim." This psalm was designed for the choral service of the Temple. Whether it was thought worthy, and accepted by the religious authorities on Temple worship, we know not. Many a man writes hymns designed for public worship which are never accepted for the purpose. "*Shoshannim*." For explanation of this, see Hengstenberg in loco. "*A Song of loves*." A marriage song in honour of some peerless king.

Ver. 1.—"*My heart is inditing a good matter*" (Margin: "boileth, or bubbleth up"). The writer means to say that his heart was overflowing with loving emotions. "A good matter." This was his own estimation of the matter—it was good. Whether the theme was good in itself,

is another question. "*I speak of the things which I have made touching the king.*" What king? A king in actual existence, or a king merely in his own conception. Presumably the latter. "*My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.*" The idea is, Be my tongue as the pen of a ready writer, prompt and facile.

Ver. 2.—"*Thou art fairer than the children of men : grace is poured into thy lips : therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.*" "With beauty art thou arrayed beyond the children of men. Gracefulness is shed upon thy lips, therefore hath Elohim blessed thee for ever."—*Delitzsch*. Whether there is any reference here, or in any other part of the psalm, to the Messiah or not, to Him this language has a truthful application. He is indeed in a moral sense "fairer than the children of men," the truly Beautiful One.

Ver. 3.—"*Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.*" Here the poet's king is invoked to rouse himself to battle. Arm thyself for glorious conquests. Let thy victories be equal to thy glory and thy majesty.

Ver. 4.—"*And in thy majesty ride prosperously.*" Ancient warriors were wont to go forth to conquest in chariots of war. "*Because of truth and meekness and righteousness.*" In the strength of these thou art to go forth, and for these thou art to battle. "*And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.*" Thy mighty power shall teach thee, or rather lead thee, to tremendous achievements.

Ver. 5.—"*Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies ; whereby the people fall under thee.*" The Hebrew order is, "Thine arrows are sharp ; people fall under thee in the heart of the king's enemies.

Ver. 6.—"*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever : the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre.*" "Thy throne is God's throne, and endureth for ever." * This is a good translation, and expresses the idea that the king of whom he was speaking reigned by Divine authority, and reigned permanently. Was this language intended to point to the Messiah? It certainly suggested Him to the man who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter i. verse 8. There is no grammatical necessity to regard the poet in these words as referring to the hero of his poem. How natural it is for thoughtful writers to break away from the leading train of thought into the realm of devotion ; to turn from subordinate subjects to the supreme !

Ver. 7.—"*Thou lovest*" (that is, the king, whoever he might be) "*righteousness and hatest wickedness : therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*" The king that loves the right and hates the wrong, the Supreme Monarch of the universe fills with joy. "Oil of gladness" is a figure borrowed from the ancient Oriental usage of anointing the head on festive occasions.

* See "The Psalms by Four Friends." Macmillan.

Ver. 8.—“*All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.*” “Myrrh and aloes and cassia are all thy garments; out of ivory palaces doth the music of stringed instruments make thee glad.”—*Delitzsch*. His very garments are impregnated with the most delicious odours, as the robes of Oriental sovereigns at their nuptial festivals in their palaces of ivory.

Ver. 9.—“*Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen, in gold of Ophir.*” The festive companions of this king on his marriage-day were amongst the illustrious of the earth—the daughters of kings on one side, and his bride the queen, clad in gold of Ophir, on his right hand.

Ver. 10, 11, 12.—“*Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him. And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour.*”

“Hearken, O daughter, consider, and incline thine ear;
Forget all thine own people and thy father's house;
And let the king have pleasure in thy beauty,
For he is thy Lord and worship thou him:
And the daughter of Tyre shall wait on thee with a gift,
Yea, and the rich ones of the earth.”

Four Friends.

Here the poet seems to see the bridal queen approach in stately grandeur the festive scene, and he addresses her; and in his address he deals out counsels of wisdom, he inculcates wifely duties, and holds out encouraging inducements.

Ver. 13, 14, 15.—“*The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace.*” The bride is evidently the daughter of some king, and is here described as she appeared in her father's palace prepared to come forth to meet her royal bridegroom. There she is glorious within her father's house, her clothing is “wrought with gold.” She is arrayed in gorgeous apparel all embroidered with gold. She is described here as about being brought forth from her old home to the man to whom she is about being formally wedded. “She shall be brought forth unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.” The entire imagery is that of an Oriental marriage procession, where the bride is brought to her intended husband, attended by her virgin companions, or, as we should say, her bridesmaids. These are of the same illustrious rank as the queen herself, and are all full of “gladness and rejoicing” as they “enter into the king's palace.”

Ver. 16.—“*Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.*” Here the address is not to the bridal queen, but to her future husband the king. It predicts for him an illustrious progress.

Ver. 17.—“*I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations : therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.*” The following translation of the Four Friends I accept as faithful, and as giving unity and meaning to the whole composition.

“I will tell of thy name from one generation to another,
Therefore shall the people give praise unto thee, world without end.”

ARGUMENT.—The psalm consists of three parts. (1) A description of a royal bridegroom. His beauty and gracious presence are celebrated as proofs of God's favour—verses 1, 2. His triumphs as a warrior are pledged because of his righteousness—verses 3-9. (2) A description of his royal bride. She is attired in her father's house, prepared to meet her future husband and to come forth with her princely companions in the procession to celebrate the nuptial festivities,—verses 10-15. (3) It concludes with an address to the king. He is assured of a numerous posterity of endless fame—verses 16, 17.

HOMILETICS.—Homiletically this psalm may be regarded as describing some unknown king or the ideal king of a poet. Although it cannot be proved that such a king as represented in this psalm ever existed in *fact*, it is obvious that he existed in the conception of the poetic author. This man, if he did not see such a king with the eye of his body, saw him with the eye of his imagination; and it may not be uninteresting to make certain remarks concerning his kingly conception.

I. That his ideal conception of his king STIRRED HIS SOUL. His king appeared so grand to his imagination that it seemed to set his affection aflame. “My heart is inditing a good matter. I speak of the things which I have made concerning the king. My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.” Two thoughts are suggested,—

First: That an idea that *appears good to a man carries with it a power to move the affections*. This kingly vision was esteemed by the writer “a good matter.” He attached value and importance to it. It was not a mere flitting thought, a mere cloud without water. He esteemed it “good.” It is well when a man feels that the subject which is occupying his

mind is a *good* subject, a subject that commends itself to his judgment and conscience. When this is the case the affections will be excited: "My heart bubbleth up." What the mind sees clearly the heart must ever feel more or less deeply. There is a King—Jesus of Nazareth—true ideas concerning Whom are "a good matter" that will break up the fountains of the heart, and make all the affections like a well of water spring up to everlasting life.

Secondly: That when the affections are properly moved, *there will be a freeness and aptness of utterance.* "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer;" "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Charge a man's soul with true emotions and he will grow eloquent, though untuneful be his voice and ungrammatic his speech. Sublime feeling is the soul of eloquence; it makes a man's utterance electric. Why are modern preachers so lamentably ineffective in their pulpit discourses? Not so much because they lack ideas or rhetorical skill, as because they lack a heart bubbling up with emotion; an emotion that drowns all egotism and feathers the arrows of thought.

The next remark we offer concerning this poet's ideal is,—

II. That his conception of his king CORRESPONDS WITH NO KNOWN HISTORIC CHARACTER. Not in Egypt, Judæa, Persia, Rome, or Europe has a king appeared answering to our poet's conception. What mere human king ever appeared, concerning whom it could be said, he was "fairer than the children of men," that "grace is poured into his lips," that he embarked in battle simply for "meekness and righteousness," and always "loved righteousness and hated wickedness?" To say that no such a king, during all the ages that are gone, ever existed, would be to arrogate a knowledge of all past times. All we can say is, that no such a king appears in the chronicles of royal life. *Man has the power of conceiving better things than he has ever seen, better characters than have ever appeared.* A glorious power this!

First: It is a *proof of the Divine within us.* We have moral

intuitions which are as rays from God, revealing to us the true. It is the "light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Secondly: It is an *incentive to moral progress*. Could we form no higher conception of human character than that which we see embodied in actual life, should we make any effort to rise? Should we feel any inspiration to struggle upwards and work to make the world better?

Another remark which we offer concerning the poet's ideal king, is,—

III. That his conception of his king APPROACHES THE DIVINE TYPE.*

First: His *appearance was beautiful*. "Fairer than the children of men." A king, of all men, should be the most morally beautiful and commanding. His goodness should be at once his majesty and his right to rule.

Secondly: His *campaign was moral*. "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty," etc., etc. This king was to go forth on his triumphant march, not because of avarice, ambition, revenge, but because of truth and meekness and righteousness. These are principles worth fighting for—fighting for, not with the sword of steel, but with the sword of truth; not with arrows that pierce the body, but with arrows of conviction that enter the soul. Observe here three things: (1) *The object of a true battle*. What is it? Not the crushing of an enemy, not the extension of territory, not the aggrandizement of kings and nations, but the advancement of *truth, meekness, righteousness*. (2) *The mission of a true king*. What is it? To load his coffers with wealth, to invest his court with a dazzling brilliancy, to deepen the sea of royal luxuries, to make his power terrible in the earth? No! But to lead his people on, as a mighty chieftain, to battle against the wrong and fight for the right. "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh." No man deserves the name of king who is not a moral commander of the people, leading them on to victory over all that

* See a sketch on this text by the late Caleb Morris, *Homilist*, Editor's Series, vol. ix., page 22.

is selfish, base, unchaste, and un-Christly. (3) The *wish of a true patriot*. What is the wish? It is that the king should go as a leader into this moral warfare. "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty!"

Thirdly : His *rule was righteous*, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre."

The version of the Four Friends, viz.,—"Thy throne is God's throne, and remaineth for ever"—does not regard the poet as addressing this king as God (although poetic language might account for such exaggeration), but as expressing the idea that the throne this king occupied was God's throne. He was on it, not only by God's permission, but by His authority, and on that throne he would permanently wield a sceptre of righteousness. He was not a man-made king, but a God-made king; he was not a temporary king, but a permanent king. He was not a king whose sceptre was worldly expediency, but everlasting right.

Fourthly : His *character was true*. "Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness." This is the essential qualification of a true king, yet how rare! To love righteousness for its own sake, love it although unpopular, so love it as to hold everything cheap in comparison with it, so love it as to be prepared to sacrifice the throne, kingdom, life itself, is that love which alone can make a true king. This is the heart of true royalty.

Fifthly : His *patron was God*. "Therefore God thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." All Divine preferments are regulated by moral excellence; the Eternal promotes His moral intelligent creatures according to their goodness; and the more goodness the higher promotion. The best being in His great kingdom, He has raised "above all heavens" and given Him "a name above every name."

Sixthly : His *influences were delightful*. "All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia." These are amongst the most delicious perfumes known in nature; the Orientals

in ancient times were accustomed to use them plentifully, especially on festive occasions. The king here is represented as having his garments impregnated with them. There is a moral aroma far more delicious than all the spices of Arabia. "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ."

Seventhly: His *associations were magnificent*. "Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir. Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him. And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour. The kings' daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework; the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee." Here is regal grandeur, stately splendour, and imperial influence.

Eighthly: His *fame was enduring*. "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth. I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever." The idea seems to be, that his fame and celebrity as a king would not be derived from his ancestry—his "fathers"—but start from himself and run down through all posterity. "The idea" is, says a modern expositor, "that he would derive his dignity and honour ultimately, not so much from his ancestors as his descendants; that those who would be born unto him would be more illustrious and would have a wider dominion than any one who had gone before him in the line in which he was descended."

Another remark which we offer concerning the poet's ideal is:—

IV. That his conception of his king was not EQUAL TO THE CHARACTER OF KING JESUS. The king here portrayed transcends all the kings that figure on the page of history, all the kings of ancient story; but he does not come up to Him. I

would not degrade the Messiah by giving it an application to Him who is the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His person. There is far too much about carnal war, aromatic costume, "ivory palaces," "king's daughters," "gold of Ophir," "clothing of wrought gold," fine "needlework," enchanting princesses, to accept this as a portrait of Him whom God hath "exalted to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins," "the Prince of the kings of the earth." Whether this poem is inspired or not, I prize it, not because it gives me a picture of the Son of God, but because it suggests some useful thoughts concerning Him and the world in which He has to carry on His moral campaigns.

"Blest are they that touch Thy sceptre,
Blest are all that own Thy reign;
Freed from sin, that worse of tyrants,
Rescued from its galling chain,
Saints and angels,
All who know Thee bless Thy reign."

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COVETOUS.—The covetous man pines in plenty, like Tantalus, up to the chin in water, and yet thirsty. Like a chemist, he turns everything into silver—what he should wear and what he should eat; and so robs back and belly of warmth, of sustenance. The covetous give more heed to the priests of Janus than to the apostles of Jesus. His looks to his entering guests are like Diana's image in Chios, which frowned with a lowering countenance on all that came into the temple, but looked blithe and smiled on them that departed. As the dog in Æsop's fable lost the real flesh for the shadow of it, so the covetous man casts away the true riches for the love of the shadowy."—T. ADAMS.

CURE FOR COVETOUSNESS.—Diodorus Siculus relates, that the forest of the Pyrenean Mountains being set on fire, and the heat penetrating to the soil, a pure stream of silver gushed from the bosom of the earth, and revealed for the first time the existence of those rich lodes, afterwards so celebrated. Covetousness yields up of its pelf for sacred uses as unwillingly as if it were appointed to succeed the earth in the office of holding and concealing it; but let the fire of the Gospel be kindled in the Christian Church, and its ample stores shall be then flowing forth from their hidden recesses, and becoming "the fine gold of the sanctuary."

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Job.

The Book of Job is one of the grandest sections of Divine Scripture. It has never yet, to our knowledge, been treated in a purely Homiletic method for Homiletic ends. Besides many learned expositions on the book found in our general commentaries, we have special exegetical volumes of good scholarly and critical worth; such as Drs. Barnes, Wemyss, Mason Goode, Noyes Lee, Delitzsch, and Herman Hadwick Bernard: the last is in every way a masterly production. For us, therefore, to go into philology and verbal criticism, when such admirable works are available to all students, would be superfluous, if not presumption. Ambiguous terms, when they occur, we shall of course explain, and occasionally suggest an improved rendering; but our work will be chiefly, if not entirely, Homiletic. We shall essay to bring out from the grand old words those Divine verities which are true and vital to man as man in all lands and ages. These truths we shall frame in an order as philosophic and suggestive as our best powers will enable us to do; and this in order to help the earnest preachers of God's Holy Word.

Subject: The Third Speech of Eliphaz. (3) The Historic Section.

"Hast thou marked the old way
Which wicked men have trodden?
Which were cut down out of time,
Whose foundation was overflown with a flood:
Which said unto God, Depart from us:
And what can the Almighty do for them?
Yet He filled their houses with good things:
But the counsel of the wicked is far from me.
The righteous see it, and are glad:
And the innocent laugh them to scorn.
Whereas our substance is not cut down,
But the remnant of them the fire consumeth."

Job xxii. 15-20.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS: Ver. 15.—"*Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden.*" "Dost thou keep to the old path which wicked men have trodden."—*Dr. Bernard.* "Wilt thou observe the way of the world which evil men have trodden."—*Delitzsch.* Eliphaz utters these words, in all probability, in relation to the error which he charged upon Job in the twelfth verse, viz., as regarding God as being too foreign and too great to concern Himself with the individual affairs of individual men, as being in the "height of heaven" and beyond the stars, etc. What he here means to say, is either—"This error of thine is a very old one, dost thou keep to the old path?" or, "If thou wilt study the past, thou wilt find that God punished individual men for their sins."

Ver. 16.—“*Which were cut down out of time.*” The old sinners to whom Eliphaz here refers were, he intimates, men whose wickedness led to a premature ruin: they withered, they shrivelled up before their time. Heaven would bear with them no longer. “*Whose foundation was overflowed with a flood.*” Somethink that the “foundation” here referred to those fundamental principles of erroneous belief which he regarded Job as holding in common with them, and that he asserts that these foundation principles of theirs were borne away before them as before a rushing stream or an overflowing river, and that has come down and streamed into his mind. But the reference undoubtedly is to some great and well-known calamity that had happened to wicked men of the past.

Ver. 17.—“*Which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them?*” Here is the secret principle of these men’s wickedness; they were practical atheists. They “said unto God, Depart from us,” etc. These men had no wish to retain God in their knowledge. “The whole passage,” says Dr. Barnes, “is a most sarcastic retort on what Job had said in chap. xxi. 14, 15. He had affirmed that though wicked men used this language, yet they prospered. Eliphaz takes the same language and applies it to the sinners before the deluge, and says that they expressed themselves just in this manner. The language which Job puts into the mouths of the wicked, had indeed, said Eliphaz, been used. But by whom? By those who lived in security and prosperity. ‘By the men who lived before the deluge,’ says he, ‘the race that was so wicked that it was necessary to cut them off by the flood. These are the men to whose sentiments you appeal, these the men with whom you have sympathy!’”

Ver. 18.—“*Yet He filled their houses with good things.*” Bad as they were, they were prosperous. Some regard this expression as a biting sarcasm. Job had maintained that the wicked were prosperous. “True,” Eliphaz says, “their houses were well filled; but what became of them?” “*The counsel of the wicked is far from me.*” Here he flings Job’s own words in his face (chap. xxi. 16).

Ver. 19, 20.—“*The righteous see it, and are glad: and the innocent laugh them to scorn. Whereas our substance is not cut down, but the remnant of them the fire consumeth.*” The righteous see it and rejoice, and the innocent mock at them. Verily our opponent is destroyed, and the fire hath devoured their abundance.” This thought corresponds to that expressed as a wish, hope, or anticipation at the close of many of the psalms; that the retributive justice of God, though we may have to wait a long time for it, becomes at length the more gloriously manifest, to the joy of those hitherto innocently persecuted (Psalm lviii. 11).

HOMILETICS.—Having noticed the *theological* and the *criminatory* sections of this third address of Eliphaz to Job,

we have now to notice the *historic*. Eliphaz here points Job to the history of wickedness, and the words suggest four things in relation to it.

I. It is a history of ANCIENT DATE. It is an "old way." Or, as some render it, the "track of old." Eliphaz spoke these words 4000 years ago, and the way of sin was an "old way" then. When did sin break out in the universe? It dates too far back for us to ascertain. But however ancient, it is not *eternal*. The character of God, the teaching of the Bible, the dictates of conscience, show that sin must have had a beginning—that it was not *in* God, but an apostasy *from* Him. There was a period when not the shadow of an error darkened any single intellect, not an impure feeling heaved in any breast, not one discordant note was heard anywhere throughout immensity. Holiness alone is eternal, because God is eternal. But we can no more answer the *when* of its birth than the *how*; all we know is, that it prowled about the creation when Eden was in its bloom and Adam in his pristine innocence. The way of sin is "an old way," a way in which all generations have trod. The history of the world is indeed but the history of this old way.

II. It is a history of TERRIBLE CALAMITIES. "Which were cut down out of time," etc. Some terrible calamities are referred to here. Most expositors acknowledge this, though they differ in their speculations concerning the exact particulars. What are the calamities connected with this "old way?" There are *personal* calamities. Deadness of intellect, dormancy of conscience, pollution of imagination, perversion of will. The soul is a vineyard laid waste, a temple in ruins, an empire in anarchy, a world in chaos. There are *social* calamities. The chicaneries of commerce, the feuds of families, the wars of nations, the groans of the oppressed, the wails of the bereaved, the moans of the dying, the graves of the dead. There are *material* calamities. Yawning earthquakes, withering pestilences, blighting famines, scathing lightnings, desolating tempests; all these are calamities connected with the history of the "old way." Truly an awful way is the "old way."

III. It is a history of PRACTICAL ATHEISM. "Which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them?" The untold millions who have trod this old way, who are treading it now, and will tread it through coming times, differ from each other in innumerable particulars; but they are all agreed in this practical atheism. This is the philosophy of their conduct and the essence of their guilt. They have not only no *sympathy* with God, and therefore no blessed connection with the fountain of life, light, and love, but an *antipathy* towards Him: they say, "Depart from us." (1) A guilty conscience makes men *dread* God. Sense of guilt evermore invests Almighty Love with attributes of vengeance and terror. (2) Dread of God makes men *hate* Him. Once you get to fear a being, and you will soon get to hate him. Your fear will clothe him with attributes that will kindle your hottest indignation. (3) Hating God prompts men to *repel* Him. "Depart from us." You hate a sovereign, and you crave for his dethronement; hate a man, and you hunger for his ruin. Men in this "old way" hate God, and they would banish Him from the universe if they could. The only place from which they can expel Him is from their hearts, and this they do.

IV. It is a history LIABLE TO MISINTERPRETATION. "He filled their houses with good things," etc. Eliphaz misapplied it now to Job. He meant to insinuate either that Job was treading the "old way" of wickedness, which was not true, or that the ruin that overtook the sinners of ancient times proved that God dealt with men according to their characters here; and that, as Job was a great sufferer, he was therefore a great sinner. Men make misapplication of the history of wickedness. First: When they conclude that God is *indifferent* in relation to the moral character of men. The worldly prosperity of the wicked sometimes leads them to conclude this. Secondly: When they conclude that because God does not punish wicked men at once, He will not *punish them at all*. This they often do. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts

of the children of men set themselves to do evil." Whilst men thus misapply this history, it has nevertheless lessons of great significance. First: It teaches the *vastness of man's power*. All the forces of nature, all the laws and operations of God, all the intuitions of the soul, all the strivings of the spirit, are against wickedness. Yet men sin. Here is power, awful power. Secondly: It teaches the *greatness of God's patience*. Wickedness is to the last degree abhorrent to the nature of the Eternal; and He could by a mere volition annihilate all its workers in an instant. Yet He allows them to continue to tread the "old way." "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness," etc. Thirdly: It teaches the *energy of human influence*. One man at the head of the race broke at first into this "old way" of wickedness, and all follow. The one sin of Adam has vibrated through all souls. "As by one man sin entered into the world," etc. Fourthly: It teaches the *magnitude of Christ's work*. He came to destroy the "old way," by turning it into a way of holiness; in other words, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He came to stem the torrent of human depravity, swollen by the confluent streams of ages, to uproot the seeds of evil imbedded deep in the heart of humanity, to dethrone the principalities and powers of darkness which held a mastery over the race for ages, etc.

FATAL COVETOUSNESS.—M. Fosque, the French millionaire miser, in order to make sure of his treasures, dug a cave in his wine-cellar so large and deep that he could go down with a ladder. At the entrance was a door with a spring lock, which on shutting would fasten of itself. After a time, he was missing. Search was made for him; but to no purpose. At last his house was sold. The purchaser, beginning to rebuild it, discovered a door in the cellar, and going down, found him lying dead on the ground, with a candlestick near him; and on searching farther, discovered the vast wealth which he had amassed. He went into the cave; and, the door, by some accident, shutting after him, he perished for want of food. He had eaten the candle and gnawed the flesh off both arms. Thus died this avaricious wretch in the midst of the treasure which he had heaped together.

Germs of Thought.

Subject: Seed from God's Store-house.

"Light is sown for the righteous."—PSALM xcvii. 11.

IN dwelling upon this precious truth, I shall notice,—

I. THE SEED: "Light." The preciousness of the figure is seen as we reflect, (1) Upon the quality of this seed, "Light." "Whatsoever doth *make manifest* is "*light*." (2) The idea of increase involved in the fact, "Light is sown." And (3) The seed is the gift of God, and therefore has the power to reproduce itself. All the science in the world could not make a single grain of wheat capable of growing. Grain springs from grain now, in the ordinary processes of nature. But it is self-evident that the first grain did not spring from a grain; therefore a single grain of wheat involves the idea or necessity of a God. So, all the "light" that is scattered through the moral midnight of earth, and which causes our old world to brighten as it rolls, is the gift of God.

II. THE SOWING. "Light is sown." (1) God is not only the Author of the seed, but He was also the first to scatter it. Dwelling in the midst of the unlocked granaries of "light" in reference to Himself, man, and especially the great scheme of redemption, He soon commenced to scatter the precious seed for the good of His creatures; and holy men also became sowers, "who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." During the short ministry of Jesus Christ, He scattered more "light" upon the character of Himself and His feelings towards sinners and towards sin, than could have possibly reached us by any other hands. His Divine as well as His human hands were used in sowing. The work was so exhausting that "He sweat great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (2) "Light is sown" by "the righteous," (a) for themselves, and (β) for the good of others. Sometimes, being moral agents, God has to leave us to sow our own "light." Many of us

In the Book of Job.
 "to do evil" Field
 "his lessons"

and besetments and follies from which nothing but the experience could have turned us away. (3) Light sown by the righteous also by the wicked. Wicked sow "light," which reveals to the world the terrible truth. The precursors of the French Revolution swept religion; next, the banners of atheism in the breeze; and next, the Bible burned in the streets of Paris; and next, the king dethroned and the republic given to anarchy, when for a century, with blood flowing night and day from guillotines and scaffolds, the awful frenzy raged. National life and government is an engine of tremendous power, which will run itself to destruction unless regulated and checked by a belief in God. In the case of France, this check was removed, and the motion became so intense, that the segments, pulleys, and shafts of the State were sent flying in every direction. This light, sown by the hand of blood and destruction, was scattered for our benefit, and is a commentary on the text, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." (β) That man who is a slave to strong drink; that young man in fetters of iron, led off to the State prison, is sowing light upon the slopes and pitfalls of sin, and warning others to shun the causes of his fall.

III. THE REAPERS. "The righteous," not the merely nominal professor, not the man who takes the name of Christ but has forgotten to partake of His spirit, but "*the righteous*." Not an angel either. The man of many and conscious shortcomings, but whose purpose in the right is a whole purpose, and who stands before his conscience and his God in the full honours of rectitude. Such a man is in the midst of growing "light," no matter where he is. Light is sown for such a man all over the field of his probation; from the gate of responsible action it is scattered in every direction, clear back to the river of death which rolls at the extreme end. Duty is made plain. He sees the footprints of others who have gone before him to success and victory. He sees how others have grappled with difficulty and death, and triumphed in the name of Jesus.

He sees what wonders God has wrought by men of ordinary talent who have gone forth in His name.

My dear sir, are you a righteous man? If so, everything connected with God and the history of the world conspires to brighten your pathway and lure you to present and eternal victory. But are you in your sins, and unsaved? If so, you are in darkness until now; and are in every place that means danger, and folly, and madness, and suicide, and damnation. Soon you will be summoned to that sphere where the blood of Christ will be powerless to cleanse, and where the starless night of desolation will settle down upon you for ever. God help you to strike for liberty and life, and to do it *now*. Amen.

THOMAS KELLY, M.A.

Subject: Lessons from a Lost Book.

"Also he bade them," etc.—2 SAM. i. 18.

WITHOUT entering into the controversy on "the book of Jasher," let us consider the text as it is presented in our version. We have in the text an illustration of—

I. THE COMBINATION OF THE POETICAL AND THE PRACTICAL IN ONE PERSON. Where will you find a truer, sweeter, deeper, more gifted poet than David? Where will you find a more natural and soul-moving lyrical outburst of grief than this over Jonathan? Tennyson's tender and touching, delicate and profound, and, to bereaved hearts, unspeakably precious "In Memoriam" is poor compared with this Davidic ode. Yet the poet, in his sorrow and his dirge, is wise, forecasting, politic, practical. With the bow and arrow Saul and Jonathan had been slain, so David would have the children of Judah well trained in "the use of the bow." Note two points:—

First: *When the poetic is unpractical, merely dreamy, unsubstantial, vain, it loses all true worth,—ceases, indeed, to be poetry; for the poet, as the name indicates, is a maker, a creator.*

Second: *When the practical is dissociated from the poetic, it becomes dreary, unexalting, ignoble. When men aim at the merely utilitarian, they miss even their own low mark. We*

need the ideal, the poetic, in combination with the practical and utilitarian, to attain to completeness and symmetry. "The use of the bow" and the use of the lyre must go together, if we would have a symmetrical order of things—a cosmos.

II. THE DISORDER OF HUMAN NATURE. Saul and Jonathan are slain. The earth has not yet absorbed their blood. A deep, genuine, sacred sorrow is wailing in sad minor key through the soul of David. Surely it is a most pathetic, reverent time with the poet king! Yet he must give instructions as to "the use of the bow." Sorrowing for the absent ones removed by skilful archers, yet he deems it prudent to have the children of Judah made skilful archers, that they in their turn may make wives widows, happy children orphans, and take other Jonathans away from other Davids. There must be some "cursed obliquity" in human nature; the normal must have given place to the abnormal, ere this could have come to pass. The Biblical narrative of human apostasy is, we believe, the key to the enigma.

III. THE IMPERMANENCE OF HUMAN WORKS. Where is "the book of Jasher?" Who knows it? What did it contain? Was it in prose or poetry? Was it dialectical or didactic? We know something of the theories concerning it; but with any theory we must feel how impermanent are human doings.

Suppose it means,—

First: *A book by some one named Jasher.* Well, who was he? What was his character? What was his book about? Where now is all the treasure of his heart and brain, which he poured forth in his book? Alas! Jasher, we condole with thee.

Second: *A book for the regulation of equity between man and man.* How sad that any attempt, even the feeblest, to rectify the disordered state of human affairs, should fail! Surely, in any normal state, any effort to promote equity should succeed and be remembered. But even such a book is not permanent.

Third: *A book in which the heroic deeds of righteous men were recorded.* That must live! A righteous man—how

grand! But what adjective is adequate to set forth "the heroic deeds of a righteous man"? A righteous man and heroic worker,—surely the book that speaks of such must live! Alas, no! This book of the heroic deeds of the upright has gone.

"Sic transit gloria mundi."

IV. THE PERMANENCE OF LIFE, AS CONTRASTED WITH ITS TEMPORARY HUMAN RECORDS. "The book of Jasher" is no more; but the men and their deeds of whom it contained records, they are *not* no more; the men live, the influence of the deeds lives. Books pass away, men endure; records of deeds are soon lost, the influence of deeds lives on. Do not write a poem; live a poem. Trouble not about the record of the life; but be careful of the life. "The book of Jasher" may be unimportant; but the life of Jasher is of incalculable importance, perhaps to many, certainly to Jasher.

WILLIAM JONES.

The Essentials of Christianity.

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."—Rom. xiv. 17.

IN reading the New Testament, "kingdom of God" "kingdom of heaven," "kingdom of Christ," are phrases of frequent occurrence. John the Baptist made the desert of Judea echo with the cry,—*"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* The prophet Daniel, in his wonderful visions, graphically describes the rise and fall of kingdoms founded by human ambition; and when each had served its purpose, last of all the God of heaven set up a kingdom and decreed that it should stand for ever. Christianity is that kingdom, called kingdom of God because its laws and constitution were originated in the Divine Mind and established through the influence of the Divine Spirit; and Paul, as an ambassador of the kingdom, expounds in the text the nature of this Divine rule in the human soul.

I. NEGATIVE DESCRIPTION OF TRUE RELIGION.—“*Not meat and drink.*” The expression “meat and drink” includes the carnal and sensational in every form. For they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts.” The Apostolic Churches were troubled by the sensuous in two forms, viz.—the rites and ceremonies of Judaism on the one hand, and the licentious habits of pagan converts on the other; and it was no easy task to pilot the vessel between these two dangerous rocks. (1) True religion is *not ceremonial observances*. When the spirituality of the Church is at a low ebb, we always find a greater importance attached to external rites. This was the case with the Jewish Church when our Saviour appeared in the flesh. The Temple service was carried on with regularity and gorgeousness while the soul of religion was gone; they paid tithe of mint, anise, and cummin, and omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; they made clean the outside of the cup and platter, but within was extortion and excess; they enlarged the hem of their garment, made broader their phylacteries, fasted twice a week, put on a sad countenance to be seen of men, gave alms, taking special care to sound the trumpet of their own praise; but all this was a poor substitute for spiritual life, nothing else than whitewashing a grave. Paul had no end of trouble from false teachers, who made a systematic effort to introduce Jewish rites among the early believers in Christ, such as circumcision, abstaining from certain kinds of food at certain seasons of the year, observing days and seasons (1 Cor. viii. 8). The spirituality of the Church had been greatly injured by these silly and pernicious customs, and the Apostle thought it full time to lift a standard against them. “For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.” (2) True religion is *not the gratification of the appetites*. Pagan converts ran to the other extreme of the same error; religion to them was a matter of eating and drinking. They had been accustomed to associate worship with gluttony, drunkenness, and licentiousness of the lowest type; they indulged in the wildest

revelries during the festivities of Bacchus, and the worship of Venus reached the lowest pitch of uncleanness and sensuality,—“For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.” To Christianize a people of such views and habits was no easy task; to build out of such materials temples for the Holy Ghost required great skill and patience. These pagans came into the Church expecting it to supply them with fresh opportunities to pamper their carnal appetites; they transformed the sacred institution of the Lord’s Supper into a carousal, the wealthy members eating and drinking immoderately, while the poor members had none at all (1 Cor. xi. 21). In this state of things Paul felt it incumbent upon him to remind them that the kingdom of God was not meat and drink, and warn them that if they persisted in this disreputable course they would eat and drink damnation to themselves. (3) True religion is *not æsthetic idealism*. There is an intellectual dissipation and a moral sensuousness no less injurious to the vitality of religion than that of bodily excess. Many minds have been so emasculated and “corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” by over-culture, as to lose all relish for doing, and they spend their time in dreaming. In this state of mind they devise for themselves an ideal Christ, no more like the real Christ of the gospels than the sensitive plant that grows in a hot-house, to the hardy oak whose giant arms defy the storm.

This idolatry of the ideal fixes men’s attention wholly upon the feminine side of the Redeemer’s character,—His devoutness, tenderness, fidelity, tears, and obedience; but His abject poverty, His stern rebukes of pride and hypocrisy, His bloody sweat in the Garden, and heart-rending cry upon the cross, are either kept out of sight or distorted so as to lose their original significance. This view of Christ and Christianity does not harmonize with the spirit of revelation, and must be classed with the sentimental tears of the daughters of Jerusalem over the Condemned One, fainting under the weight of His cross on the way to the place of a skull, and which He stanchd with the peremptory command,—“Weep

not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." To the idealist the Bible is a perfumery to regale the jaded senses, and not the voice of God, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." The house of prayer is a floral hall, where the roll of music reverberates, and the dim light plays softly on the eye, and fashion displays the contents of its wardrobes; and not the house of God, where sincerity agonizes and devotion sheds tears of penitence and joy! "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

II. POSITIVE DESCRIPTION OF TRUE RELIGION. Godliness consists of rectitude, tranquillity, and jubilation of heart. The godly man is he whose spirit is free from chronic injustice, feverish restlessness, and fearful apprehension. (1) True religion consists in "*Righteousness*." This is the gift of God in Christ to all true believers—"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." It is the fruit of the humiliation and atonement of Christ freely bestowed upon the sinner—"Not by works of *righteousness* which we have done but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." In theological language this is called "Justification," and no doctrine has greater prominence in the epistles of Paul; he himself knew the value of this doctrine, and felt anxious that all others should know it too. On the ground of self-righteousness no one stood higher than Saul of Tarsus, the "blameless" young Pharisee of Gamaliel's school; but to his astonishment he found that life eternal was not obtainable on that score, and cried out, "Being found in Him, not having mine own *righteousness*, but the *righteousness* which is of God by faith."

The Bible speaks of the "robe of righteousness," where-with the soul is covered and clothed; thus it was with the Prodigal in gospel story; when the father saw the ragged garments of his vagabond son, he commanded the servants—"Bring forth the best robe and put it on him," and this best

robe was woven out of the humiliation, tears, bloody sweat, and sufferings of the Redeemer. This righteousness is the "wedding garment" in the parable of the great supper; all the guests that had it on were welcome, but he who had entered without it became "speechless," and was cast "into outer darkness." (2) True religion consists in "*Peace*." The Gospel is a message of peace to all, a ministry of reconciliation to them that are afar off, and to those that are nigh. This is twofold; (a) Peace with God; the old enmity against God's character and government is slain, and the hostile parties become reconciled, and the peace that passeth understanding follows,—“For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.” Tranquillity of mind is simply impossible until this reconciliation is effected. Who can be free from agitation and inward misgivings whilst the condemnation of God hangs over his head like the sword of Damocles, ready to fall the moment the thread of Divine patience snaps in sunder? (b) Peace with ourselves: Conscience gives up accusing, the passions are kept under restraint, and the little kingdom within, which was once in a state of insurrection, becomes quiet and subdued; the strongholds are pulled down, and every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Moreover, learn to distinguish between a state of *indifference* and a state of *peace*; the former resembles the murky atmosphere before the storm, and, the latter, the bright sunshine and the verdant soil after the storm. Christ promised His disciples, shortly before His ascension—“Peace I leave with you, not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (3) True religion consists in “*Joy in the Holy Ghost*.” Righteousness, or forgiveness, is the lowest state in Christian experience; Peace is the middle state; Joy is the crowning state. Righteousness is the foundation of the temple, safe and sound; peace is the superstructure, roofed in, affording shelter to the weary, heavy-laden soul; joy is the tower, with a peal of bells giving forth a clear musical expression of the incalculable

advantages of a holy life. Or, to change the figure, righteousness is the "root of the matter," strong and healthy; peace is the flower, fine and fragrant; joy is the fruit, ripe and delicious.

Many Christians remain throughout life in a state of righteousness—a state of conviction, subject to bondage—in the rudiments of the doctrine of Christ, laying again and again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and never go on unto perfection (Heb. vi. 1, 2). They are like sponges; the organization of these creatures is so very low as to lead to a doubt whether they ought to be referred to the animal or vegetable kingdom. But naturalists are now generally agreed in regarding them as animals, though of the lowest type. Likewise, Christians who remain in a state of righteousness are "alive to God through Christ our Lord;" still their spiritual life is of the lowest type,—“such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat;” they shall be saved, yet so as by fire. - Others have advanced a step higher, and attained to a state of peace; they feel sure that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, that the condemnation is removed, that they have received the spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father. Still they do not fully realise the value of their new position as joint heirs with Christ. In the process of coining sovereigns, when the metal has been melted, rolled into fillets, cut into small pieces, and weighed, the correct blanks are rung on a sounding iron, and those that do not give a clear sound are called "dumb," and are sent back to be melted the second time. The dumb blanks are good gold, but as they lack the ringing sound they cannot pass into the press-room to receive the last impression. So those Christians who have reached a state of peace and remain there are good gold, nevertheless they are "dumb blanks," and have need of being re-melted in the furnace either of conviction or affliction, and made to feel that the Lord is gracious, so as to reach that jubilant state of feeling which breaks out into exultation that can "glory in tribulations also."

The harp of the Church is hanging unstrung upon the wil-

lows in these days ; and we are either ignorant that joy is a part of the heritage of them that are sanctified, or else we are ashamed of exercising this right in the presence of a scoffing generation, lest they should call us fanatics and hypocrites. Whatever be the cause, we rarely meet a "joyous Christian" whose "cup runneth over ;" it is our own fault that we do not enjoy this triumphant feeling.

"Joy in the Holy Ghost." He is the inspirer of this joy. Religion never borrows from the world, it is original and independent even in its amusements. There is another kind of joy produced by stimulants ; it rattles on the tongue and flashes in the eye, but that is not the joy of which the text speaks,—*"And be not drunk with wine; wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit."*

The joy of the Holy Ghost is (1) demonstrative in its nature. The outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost was a most exciting scene ; the power from on high came like a "mighty rushing wind;" all were amazed, and the mockers said with a sneer, "These men are full of new wine;" the excitement almost resembled intoxication. During seasons of great awakening, when God has visited His Church, this has been repeated ; men's minds and bodies have been moved as the trees of the wood are moved by the wind. (2) This joy is permanent. *"As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing."* To possess it, is to possess the most precious of treasures, the sweetest of pleasures, and the richest of feasts ; it is a constant summer in the soul, and a heaven in miniature. *"Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, rejoice."*

Oaklands Chapel, London.

ALONZO GRIFFITHS.

Subject: Christ and the Soul.

"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."—*Rev. i. 5, 6.*

THESE words suggest a few thoughts concerning Christ and the soul.

I. Christ is the **LOVER** of the soul. "Unto Him that loved us." Other beings may love the human soul,—angels may, saints may,—but no one has loved it as Christ has. "Unto Him that loved us."

First: He loved it with an *absolutely disinterested* love. Alas! we know but little of disinterested affection. With all our love for each other there is generally a mixture of selfishness. But Christ had nothing to gain from the human spirit; its damnation would not diminish His blessedness; its salvation would not add to His ineffable bliss. He loved the soul for its own sake, as the offspring of God, endowed with wonderful capabilities, possessing in itself a fountain of influence that would spread indefinitely through all time and space.

Secondly: He loved it with a *practically self-sacrificing* love. It was not a love that existed merely as an emotion, or that even wrought occasional services; it was a love that led to the sacrifice of Himself. "He loved us, and gave Himself for us." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life."

Thirdly: He loved it with an *earnestly forgiving* love. When we were enemies Christ died for the ungodly. He loved those who were not only out of sympathy with Him, but who were in malignant hostility to Him; and His love was not only such as to incline Him to listen to petitions for pardon, but that inspired Him with an intense longing to forgive His enemies. "Herein is love." Who ever loved like this? Here is a love whose height, depth, length, breadth, passeth all knowledge.

II. Christ is the **CLEANSE** of the soul. "And washed us from our sins in His own blood." The *moral* restoration of the soul to the knowledge, image, and enjoyment of God, is represented in a variety of figures in the Bible, which is a highly figurative book. When the lost state of the soul is represented as a state of condemnation, then its restoration is represented as forgiveness or justification: when its lost state is represented as enmity to God, then its restoration is set forth under the metaphor of reconciliation: when its lost state is represented as a state of death or sleep, then its restoration is

set forth as a quickening and awakening : when its lost state is represented as a bondage, then its restoration is set forth as an enfranchisement : when its lost state is represented as a state of pollution or uncleanness, then its restoration is represented as a washing or a cleansing. All these figurative expressions represent one thing, the moral restoration of the soul ; and this is spoken of in the text as done by Christ. "Washed us from our sins in His own blood." To be washed in blood is an expression that sounds incongruous and somewhat offensive ; but it does not mean material blood, as the vulgar and the sensuous understand, but the *spiritual* blood, which is His moral life, His self-sacrificing love. The cleansing influence which is here applied to the blood is elsewhere applied to "the name of Christ," to "the spirit of Christ," * to "the word of Christ." Now "ye are clean though the word I have spoken ;" again, "Sanctified through Thy truth." Then to the water of the word. "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." The "name," the "word," the "spirit," the "truth," which are represented in such passages as cleansing the soul, must of course be regarded as meaning essentially the same thing as "blood" here, which stands for the moral spirit of Christ ; which is the same thing as Christ Himself. He it is who cleanseth the soul, cleanseth it by His life. The figurative language here is purely Judaic, taken from the old Temple ceremonies ; for almost all things "were purified by the law through blood." The grand mission and work of Christ are, to "put away sin" from the soul. Sin is the guilt, sin is the curse, sin is the ruin of human nature. Sin is not so engrained, so wrought into the texture of the human soul, that it cannot be removed ; it can be washed out, it is separate from it, it can be removed.

III. Christ is the ENNOBLER of the soul. "Hath made us kings and priests unto God." Alford renders it, "He made us a kingdom, even priests unto God ;" but I prefer our present vision, "kings and priests."

First: Christ makes souls "*kings*." "I appointed you a

* 1 Cor. vi. 11.

kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me." Souls in their unregenerate state are paupers, prisoners, slaves; they are the mere creatures of internal passions and external circumstances. Christ enthrones the soul, gives it the sceptre of self-control, and enables it to make all things subservient to its own moral advancement.

Secondly: Christ makes souls "*priests*." True priests are in some respects greater than kings; kings have to do with creatures, priests with God. Christ, then, is the Ennobler of souls. Worldly sovereigns may bestow titles of greatness on men, but they cannot bestow greatness itself. Christ bestows true greatness, greatness of thought, heart, sympathy, aim, nature. He alone is great whom Christ makes great; all others are in the mud of corruption.

IV. Christ is the God of the soul. "To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." The souls whom Christ has loved, cleansed, and ennobled, feel that He is their God, and render to Him the willing and everlasting homage of their nature. "Unto Him that loved us," etc. God in Christ is the grand Object of human worship; and those whom Christ has thus restored cannot but worship Him. Worship with them is not a service but a spirit, is not obedience to a law, but the irrepressible instincts of a life.

CONCLUSION.—What think ye of Christ? Who has ever loved or can love as He has loved? Who but He can put away sin from the human soul and raise it to the true dignity of kings and priests? Who but He can inspire and command the worship of the soul?

COVETOUSNESS IN OLD AGE.—Old men are generally querulous, impatient, discontented, suspicious, vainly fearful of contempt or want; and from thence or some other secret cause, are covetous and sordid, in sparing against all the rules of reason and religion. Covetousness is styled by the Apostle "the root of all evil;" and as the root in winter retains the sap when the branches have lost their leaves and verdure, so in old age—the winter of life—covetousness preserves its vigour when other vices are fallen off. Usually, the nearer men approach to the earth, they are more earthly-minded, and, which is strange to amazement, at the sunset of life are providing for a long day."—SALTER.

Biblical Criticism.

Subject: Election.

EXPERIENCE tells us that all men do not accept the Gospel, that all do not believe, that many remain indifferent to its preaching, or even show hostility to it. This fact may be explained, first, in a very simple and natural and at the same time practical manner, by saying that God wills the salvation of all, but that many, by their own perverseness and obstinacy, reject the offered salvation, and thus choose their own perdition. This explanation has in its favour what is called common sense; and, moreover, morality is directly interested in enforcing its practical consequences. We shall not be surprised, therefore, to find Paul frequently laying stress on those consequences.

Nevertheless, speculation, in analysing the idea of the Divine Omniscience, in so far as it is able to comprehend it, that is to say, without rendering it independent of the notion of time, arrives at a totally different theory, and enunciates the thesis of *election*. It says: Just as God had, before all time, decreed absolutely the salvation of men by Christ, so has He also chosen the individuals who are to be made heirs of salvation. The formula used by the Apostle to convey this thought contains several terms which it will be well for us to examine specially. These set forth, on the one hand, the *decree* of God in the absolute and abstract sense; on the other hand, a choice or predestination in the concrete and individual sense.

The absolute decree is evidenced by the individual election. It is God, then, who works all things "according to the good pleasure of His will," a phrase in which one of the two closing words would be altogether needless, except to give emphasis to the idea of the absolute. These terms, it is true, do not occur very frequently in the writings of Paul; but there can

be no doubt as to their signification. Christians are called the elect, not as an historical assertion, and to represent them as a class or company of remarkably virtuous people, but as an affirmation of the doctrine that they owe to Divine grace their privilege of belonging to the Church. They are spoken of as the *elect* simply, or as the elect of God, or as elect in Christ, thus designating at the same time the Divine Persons on whose operations the individual election depends. The election itself is an election of grace, an expression which excludes any notion of personal merit, and implies, further, the obtaining of certain benefits constituting a privilege. From the metaphysical point of view which commands this whole question, it is important to show that the Apostle really connects his thesis, as philosophy has always done, with the idea of the Divine Omniscience, so that we cannot err as to the nature and basis of the doctrinal theory we are setting forth. All the rest is but an inevitable corollary from this fundamental idea, which is therefore the only point open to critical question. Election being an act of the will of God, and it being impossible for the will of God to fail of its purpose, it follows that the elect must necessarily and infallibly attain salvation. God Himself will provide the means, and guide His chosen to the right use of them; He will dispose and prepare them, not only for the final glory, but for all that precedes it.

We are anxious to make a few more observations on this important subject, and to endeavour to enter yet more fully into the views of the Apostle. Chapters nine to eleven of the Epistle to the Romans contain various statements which will help to throw light upon this point in his system. Some have thought that all difficulties were removed (and especially those arising out of a just recognition of the claims of morality), by supposing the Pauline theory of predestination to be as follows: All men are sinners: none can make any claim to blessedness: all have deserved condemnation. If God were to be simply just, He might deliver all indiscriminately to eternal death; but He does not so; He chooses out some, to

whom He grants salvation. The elect have no ground for boasting, for they do not owe their privilege to their own deserts : those who are not chosen have no ground for complaint, for God was under no obligation towards them ; they receive only what they had merited.

Many theologians or exegetes, we say, have satisfied themselves with this explanation, and brought themselves to believe that this is a true representation of Paul's theory. We willingly admit that on many points it might be sufficient, and that in the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans the examples of Ishmael and of Pharaoh, and still more the quotations from the prophets, do not oppose, and even seem to favour it. The preference shown by God for Isaac over his brother, offers the less difficulty, since, according to the tradition of the Jewish schools, there were sufficient grounds for such a choice. That God should harden the heart of Pharaoh does not imply that He forcibly changed an innocent man into a sinner ; the sense is simply, that He did not touch him by His grace, but left him to his own naturally hostile and impious disposition. Lastly, when Hosea and Isaiah are appealed to, to prove that God rejects one rebellious people and gives grace to another, that He saves only a small number of those who have excited His just anger, that a complete and deserved destruction, such as came upon Sodom, is averted solely by the fact of the Divine mercy—all this, it seems to us, is quite in harmony with the view given above.

But there are in the same chapter two other passages which will in no way lend themselves to such an interpretation, and in which Paul pointedly guards against the slightest possibility of error or uncertainty.

Let us observe first what he says in regard to the election of Jacob and the rejection of Esau, who are presented here as types of the elect and the reprobate generally. These were twin children of one father and mother, as all men are the creatures of the same God ; and before they were born, before they had done good or evil, the one was chosen, the other rejected. Nay more ; not only does God thus act towards them,

but He had before declared that He should so act, so that this unequal destiny was recognised as the effect of the sovereign will of God, and not as a consequence of any act of the individuals. The principle of absolute predestination was thus placed beyond the possibility of any false interpretation. Now it would be a false interpretation, to say that God knows beforehand if a man will persist in evil or if he will repent, and that He regulates predestination according to this foreknowledge. The doctrinal thesis is thus deprived of its most essential element, and the elimination of works, which is the point on which the Apostle is insisting, is lost sight of.

The other passage is still more significant. The potter, it is said, may make at his own pleasure out of the same lump of clay various vessels, some designed for an honourable, some for a degrading use. Now, we have not to do here with an historical fact, the terms of which were given, but with an image freely chosen for the sake of the argument, and consequently much more apt, if that be possible, to express the inner thought of the theologian. Now, the clay is an inert mass, having in itself no positive quality which might determine its form or use. The clay does not make itself into a vessel; before being thus shaped by the hands of the potter, it is as fit for one form as another; it is the free will, —we might almost say, the arbitrary fancy,—of the workman which decides the use to be made of it. The potter makes of the same dead mass, which is neither good nor bad, two sorts of vessels; thus, without any regard to what we call man's individual worth,—a worth altogether fictitious and imaginary,—God, from all eternity, and before the first sin of the first man, creates some for eternal glory, simply to show His boundless mercy, and prepares others for condemnation, solely to display the power of His anger; so that in the moral world there are vessels of grace and vessels of wrath, just as in the potter's workshop there are vessels unto honour and dishonour. All this is singularly clear, and assuredly no exegetical arguments can henceforth avail to overturn the system which Augustine, Calvin, Gomar, and their followers, have built upon these

premises. That Paul teaches, or does not teach, that grace is irresistible; that he does or does not assert in so many words that God creates sin in man; that he is not explicitly a supralapsarian, is of little moment; the fact remains, that no human logic, starting from the principles enunciated above, can escape these strictly necessary consequences. But what then becomes of morality, practical Christianity, Gospel preaching? If man can do nothing, absolutely nothing, cannot even listen when God calls, since God must first open his ears, and may refuse to do so; if the decree is eternal alike to salvation and to condemnation, then each may wait with stolid indifference till the event shall reveal the fate from which escape is in any case impossible. He may abandon himself to licentiousness or to despair, it makes no difference; for, we repeat it, his destiny depends in no way upon his efforts or the direction he may give to his life. The common expedient adopted by those who hold the theories of predestination,—the attempt to prop up morality by saying that no one can know if he is elected or not,—is an evasion fraught with illusion, since, after all, the determination of God was formed before the man's birth. How many men are there whose moral energy would not sink under the pressure of a conviction so overwhelming? And can this be indeed the doctrine of Paul? Why then does he say to the Corinthians, "*Run*," if to the Romans he meant to say, Your running shall avail nothing? Why say to Timothy that "God will have all men to be saved"? Why give so many exhortations, if they must be either ineffectual, even when they produce an impression upon the hearer, or superfluous, if they have no power at all to touch him? Why are so many promises given by a man who is not in the secret counsels of God, and who has not turned over the leaves of the book of life, there to read the names of the elect? To what end are faith and charity? Of what good is the Gospel, or Christ Himself, since all is said, done, decreed beforehand?

Ah, indeed! if the final utterance of the Christian revela-

tion be contained in that image of the potter and his clay, it is a bitter mockery of all the deep yearnings and legitimate desires of a soul aspiring after God. It would be at once the satire of reason against itself, and the suicide of revelation. But we are not left here to merely critical or philosophical considerations. We are writing history. Let us keep to our proper sphere, and seek in our author himself the solution of this great enigma. A thinking man may almost always be understood by others who think for themselves; and if there is anywhere a flaw in his argument, there will be some way of discovering it, and of seeing at the same time how it stands related to the truth.

EDWARD REUSS.

(To be continued.)

The Preacher's Finger-Post.

Subject: CHRISTLY BROTHERHOOD.

"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."—COL. iii. 4.

The subject suggested by these wonderful words is Christly Brotherhood. Paul here speaks of the disciples at Colosse, whom perhaps he had never seen, as being identified in life and destiny with Jesus Christ.

I. Christ is the one "*life*" of all true Christians HERE. He "*who is our life*," our spiritual life, the essence of which is supreme sympathy with the supremely good. This supreme love is the life of souls. This Adam had at

his creation, and lost. And the loss was his spiritual death and ruin: this the human race has somehow or other lost, and its loss is its guilt and ruin.

First: Christ is the *Author* of this life in the human soul. He reproduces supreme love to God by a manifestation of Him transcendently attractive and beautiful. Wherever there is spiritual life in the human soul, it has come from Christ. He is to it what the root is to the branches, what the heart is to all the members of the body, throwing the vital stream into every part. "I live," says Paul, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Secondly: Christ is the *Sustainer* of this life in the human soul. There are so many things to quench this life, so much corruption in the human heart, so many morally pestilent influences in society, that without Christ's constant agency it would soon expire. As soon may the branch flourish when cut from the root, or the river exist when cut from the fountain, as spiritual life continue when apart from Christ. Christ came to give this life. "I am come that ye might have life and that ye might have it more abundantly." (1) This is the *normal* life of souls. The constitution of the soul shows that all its faculties were made to be animated and controlled by supreme love with the supremely good. There can be no vigour in their faculties, no harmony in their operations, no growth in their power, where this love is not. (2) This is the *eternal* life of souls. What is eternal life? Not eternal duration, but eternal goodness; and eternal goodness is an imperishable supreme love to God.

Here then is Christian union. All who have true spiritual life, are united together by a vital connection with Christ—united as branches are united to the trunk, members of the body to the head, planets to the central orb.

II. Christ is the "*glory*" of all true Christians YONDER.

"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

First: *Christ* will appear. The Apostle assumes this. He feels it unnecessary to argue it, because it was universally accepted. The universal references of conscience to a great reckoning period, the concurrent beliefs of all men concerning its advent, as well as the Word of God, place the event beyond the need of argument. "*When* He shall appear." No one knows the "*when*," although presumptuous fools have made the calculations. "It is not for you to know the times and seasons."

Secondly: *We* shall appear with Him. However far distant the period, though millenniums may roll over our graves before He appears, we shall be and we shall appear with Him. As the sun, marching through the azure of immensity, bears with it all its planets, Christ, as He appears, will draw after Him all His genuine disciples. We shall see Him as He is, we shall shine in His light, we shall follow in His march.

Thirdly: He and we shall be *glorious* on that day. We shall "appear with Him in glory." How glorious will He appear! His "eyes will be as a flame of fire," His "countenance as a sun which shineth," and His "voice as the sound of many waters." Before His great white throne

the heavens and the earth will pass away, for there will be no place found for them. We shall share His glory, and share the glory of His magnificent palace, share the glory of His illustrious associates, and, above all, share the glory of His moral purity, of His Divine thoughts and lofty aims, sublime aspirations and ineffable delights.

CONCLUSION: Ye who have not this life of soul, this supreme love to God, I entreat you to seek it, seek it where alone it is to be found—in Christ Jesus, for He is our life. Ye who have it, feel and recognise your union in all lands, in all Churches, in all social conditions. He is our life. Gratefully, practically realize your obligation to Him who gave you this life and sustains it; and, conscious of the lofty destiny which awaits you, bear up with magnanimity under all the trials of life, and pursue the path of duty with the stately march of those who know they are “heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.”

Subject: ISRAEL AT ELIM—
OBEDIENCE TO THE DIVINE
WILL.

“And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters.”—Exod. xv. 27.

These words suggest two

thoughts concerning obedience to the Divine will.

I. IT OFTEN INVOLVES GREAT TRIAL. The march of the children of Israel through the wilderness, though pursued by the command of God, and therefore a duty, was connected with trials various and distressing. For example, at Marah, where they had just halted, burning, it may be, with thirst, they found the waters like wormwood. It was as truly the will of God that they should halt at Marah as at Elim. Nothing is more clear than the fact that the path of duty in this life is the path of trial. He who would do the right will have to suffer in many ways. The prison, the lion's den, the burning furnace, the martyr's stake, have always been found in the way of obedience. “In the world ye shall have tribulation.”

First: Let no man conclude from his personal trials that he is out of the path of duty. Whilst there are sublimer joys in that path than in any other, there are also trials often peculiar and very distressing. The voice of God to all sufferers in that path is, “As many as I love I rebuke and chasten.”

Secondly: Let every man in the path of duty bear up with magnanimity under his trials. They are common. “No temptation hath happened to you,” etc. They are discipli-

nary, "Our light afflictions." They are *brief*, only for a "moment."

II. It ALWAYS ENSURES GREAT PRIVILEGE. At Elim they found "twelve wells of water." Here they found abundance of the most precious element of nature, the very element they were burning for. If we pursue the right, God gives us, not only the choicest blessings, but an *abundance* of them. At Elim they found "threescore and ten palm trees." Those trees sometimes attain an amazing height, and their leaves spread out many feet in length. Those stately trees, with their luxuriant foliage, sheltered them from the rays of the scorching sun. Here, regaled with the refreshing stream and reposing under the cooling shadow of the trees, they enjoyed that rest which braced up their energies for marching on the following day. The great Father gives His children many such resting-places on the path of duty. He says to them, "Come ye yourselves into a desert place and rest awhile."

CONCLUSION:—Where are you now on the path—at Marah or at Elim? If at Marah, do not let your trials overwhelm you, disturb your patience, and cause you to murmur. Elim, with its "twelve wells of water and threescore and ten palm trees," is farther on.

Subject: — THE PREACHER BOUND, BUT THE GOSPEL FREE.

"Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound."—2 TIM. ii. 9.

"Wherein," that is, in the Gospel spoken of in the preceding verse. "I suffer," or, as some render it, "I suffer hardship up to bonds; but the word of God is not bound." The text suggests two subjects for thought.

I. THE MYSTERIOUSNESS OF PROVIDENCE, IN PERMITTING THE PERSECUTION OF EARTH'S BEST MEN. Paul was now a prisoner at Rome, in the closing stage of his career, with all the horrors of martyrdom staring him in the face. He was indeed in "bonds," chained to a Roman soldier. How strange, that a man of Paul's stamp, so good, so true, so Christly, so useful to the world, should thus be in bonds! Yet Providence has often permitted this. Daniel, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and nearly all the Apostles shared a similar fate. The permission of such an enormity reveals—

First: Man's *malignity* as a sinner. What greater cruelty can we find than in the infliction of imprisonment and death on the best men? Such an enormity reveals—

Secondly: Man's *freedom* as a sinner. Though men have sinned, God does not in-

terfere with their freedom. He allows them freely to work out their bad passions. He even allowed them to put to death the Son of God Himself. Such an enormity reveals—

Thirdly: Man's *certainty of retribution* as a sinner. This cannot go on for ever, there must come a day of judgment. Herod shall meet with John the Baptist again, Nero shall meet with Paul again, the murderers of Christ shall meet the Galilean again.

II. THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL TO PROPAGATE ITSELF UNDER THE MOST UNFAVOURABLE CIRCUMSTANCES. "But the word of God is not bound." Though I am in chains, the Gospel is free and moves on. Elsewhere Paul, in referring to his imprisonment at Rome, says, "I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which have happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel, so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places, and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear." Even in Cæsar's household His Gospel made converts. Luke tells us that Paul dwelt two whole years "in his own hired house at

Rome, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching those things that concerned the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him." How many came into his humble dwelling during those two years? to how many did he speak? how many converts did he win? We have no positive answer; but, in all probability, large numbers. Thus the Gospel has the power to propagate itself under the most unfavourable circumstances. To human appearance Paul's circumstances at Rome were most unfavourable to the spread of gospel truth. Men do not believe in the power of the Gospel to propagate itself in these days. In order for it to spread, they think its ministers must live in palaces, roll in chariots of opulence, and preach in magnificent edifices. In order for it to spread, they must have grand missionary organizations, with a large staff of well-fed, elegantly-clad officers. Ah me! we have lost faith in the power of the Gospel.

"And so the word had breath and wrought

With human hands the creed of creeds,

In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought."—*Tennyson*.

Seeds of Sermons from the Minor Prophets.

If the Bible as a whole is inspired, it is of vast importance that all its Divine ideas should be brought to bear upon the living world of men. Though the pulpit is the organ Divinely intended for this work, it has been doing it hitherto in a miserably partial and restricted method. It selects isolated passages, and leaves whole chapters and books for the most part untouched. Its conduct to the Minor Prophets may be taken as a case in point. How seldom are they resorted to for texts! and yet they abound with splendid passages throbbing with Divine ideas. It is our purpose to go through this section of the Holy Word; selecting, however, only such verses in each chapter and book as seem the most suggestive of truths of the most vital interest and universal application.

Having passed rapidly through Hosea and Joel, two of the Minor Prophets, we come now to Amos. He, we are informed, was a native of Tekoa, a small region in the tribe of Judah, about twelve miles south-east of Jerusalem. Nothing is known of his parents. He evidently belonged to the humbler class of life, and pursued the occupation of the humble shepherd. From his flock he was divinely called to the high office of prophet; and though himself of the tribe of Judah, his mission was to Israel. He was sent to Bethel, into the kingdom of the ten tribes. He commenced his ministry in the reign of Uzziah, between 810 and 783 B.C., and therefore laboured about the same time as Hosea. In his time idolatry, with its concomitant evils and immoralities of every description, reigned with uncontrolled sway amongst the Israelites, and against these evils he hurled his denunciations. The book has been divided into three parts: "First, sentences pronounced against the Syrians, the Philistines, the Phœnicians, the Edomites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Jews, and the Israelites, chapters i. and ii. Second, special discourses delivered against Israel, chapters iii. to vi. Third, visions, partly of a consolatory and partly of a comminatory nature, in which reference is had both to the times that were to pass over the ten tribes previous to the coming of the Messiah, and to what was to take place under His reign, chapters vii. to ix. His style is marked by perspicuity, elegance, energy, and fulness. His images are mostly original, and taken from the natural scenery with which he was familiar.

No. XXVIII.

Subject: REVELATION AND PRAYER.

"Thus hath the Lord God showed unto me; and, behold, He formed grasshoppers in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth; and, lo, it was the latter growth after the king's mowings. And it came to pass, that when they had made an end of eating the grass of the land, then I said, O Lord God, forgive, I beseech Thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small. The Lord repented for this: It shall not be, saith the Lord.

"Thus hath the Lord God showed unto me: and, behold, the Lord God called to contend by fire, and

it devoured the great deep, and did eat up a part. Then said I, O Lord God, cease, I beseech Thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small. The Lord repented for this: This also shall not be, saith the Lord God."—Amos vii. 1-6.

This portion of the Book of Amos (vii. and viii.), contains four symbolical visions respecting successive judgments that were to be inflicted on the kingdom of Israel. They were delivered at Bethel, and, in all probability, at the commencement of the prophet's ministry. Each of them, as they follow in the series, is more severe than the preceding. The first presented

to the mental eye of the prophet as a swarm of young locusts, which threatened to cut off all hope of the harvest (ver. 1-3); the second, a fire which effected a universal conflagration (ver. 4-6); the third, a plumb-line ready to be applied to mark out the edifices that were to be destroyed (ver. 7-9); and the fourth, a basket of ripe fruit, denoting the near and certain destruction of the kingdom (chap. viii. 1-3). The intervening eight verses which conclude the seventh chapter, contain an account of the interruption of Amos by Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, whose punishment is specially predicted. In point of style, this portion differs from that of the rest of the book, being almost exclusively historical and dialogistic.—*Henderson*.

In the words we have two subjects of thought—a *Divine revelation leading to human prayer*, and *human prayer leading to a Divine revelation*.

I. A DIVINE REVELATION LEADING TO HUMAN PRAYER.

First: Here is a *Divine revelation*. What is the revelation? It is a vision of judgments made to the mind of the prophet. Both judgments are symbolically represented. (1) Destruction by grasshoppers at the beginning, or the "shooting up of the latter growth after the king's mowings."* The prophet saw the devouring grasshoppers

eating up the grass of the land. No agents are too insignificant for the employment of Jehovah. He can inflict terrible judgments by insects. Here was a prospect of famine for the prophet. (2) Destruction by fire. "Thus hath the Lord God showed unto me; and, behold, the Lord God called to contend by fire, and it devoured the great deep, and did eat up a part." Perhaps this represents a great drought, the sun's fire burning up all vegetation. It is said, this fire "devoured the great deep." It drank up the pools, the lakes, the rivers. Thus in two symbolical forms is a Divine revelation made to the mind of Amos. Most terrible and alarming is the prospect of his country, thus divinely spread out before him. God makes revelations of His mind to His people. "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?"

Secondly: Here is a *human prayer*. What is the prayer? Here it is—"O Lord God, forgive, I beseech Thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small." And again, in verse 5, "O Lord God, cease, I beseech Thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small." "Forgive." This calamity is brought on by the sin of the nation. Forgive the sin; remove the moral cause of the judgment. "By whom shall Jacob arise?" Or, better, "How can Jacob stand? for he is

* As we write, glancing at *The Times*, we are struck with the following statements referring to such judgments: "Australian papers state that in the Riverina district the grasshoppers, or locusts, have

been very troublesome recently, not only destroying crops, but filling up wells and water holes, and even consuming textile fabrics, such as blinds and window-curtains, in the houses."

small." Jacob's—the nation's—weakness, is the plea of the prayer for forgiveness. The Israelites had been greatly reduced by repeated invasions on the part of the Assyrian kings, and were now on the point of being attacked by the Assyrians, but 'purchased their retreat by one thousand talents of silver (2 Kings xv. 19, 20). The nation was now so weakened that it was unable to stand before another invader. How can Jacob stand?

The time has come when men may well ask this question in relation to the Church. How can it stand? The numbers are decreasing, viewed in relation to the growth of the population. By whom shall it arise? Not by statesmen, scientists, ritualists, priests. A new order of men are required, to enable the Church to stand. Heaven raise them up!

II. HUMAN PRAYER LEADING TO A DIVINE REVELATION. The prophet prays, and the great God makes a new revelation, a revelation of mercy. "The Lord repented for this: It shall not be, saith the Lord." "The Lord repented for this; This also shall not be, saith the Lord God." "Repented," which means merely that He appeared to Amos as if He repented. The immutable One changeth not. Though we are far enough from holding the absurdity that human prayer effects any alteration in the ordinances of nature or the purposes of the Almighty, we nevertheless hold with a tenacious faith the doctrine that *a man gets from God by prayer that which he would not get without it.* Indeed, in every department of life man gets

from the Almighty, by a certain kind of activity, that which he would never have without the effort. A man has a field which he has never tilled, and on which Providence has bestowed no crop for many a long year. He tills it this year, and in autumn Heaven crowns it with its goodness. Another man has no health; for many years he has neglected the conditions of physical vigour, and he is infirm and afflicted. This year he attends rigorously to the laws of his physical well-being. He takes the proper exercise, the right food, the pure air, and he feels his infirmities and his pains decrease, and new vigour pulsating through his veins. Another man has never enjoyed the light of Divine knowledge; his soul has been living in the region of indolence; he has neglected all the means of intelligence. He alters his course and sets to work; he reads and thinks, studies God's holy book and prays; he feels his nature gradually brightening under the genial rays of truth. Thus everywhere God reveals to a man His goodness in connection with his activity, which never comes without human effort. It is so in prayer. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." It puts the soul in that angle on which the Divine light falls, in that soil in which its intellectual and moral powers will grow. "Ask, and ye shall receive."

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of.
Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night
and day.

For what are men better than
sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life within
the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not
hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those
who call them friends.
For so the whole round earth
is every way
Bound by gold chains about
the feet of God."

Tennyson.

No. XCIX.

Subject: THE CONVENTIONAL AND
THE GENUINE PRIESTS OF A
PEOPLE.

"Then Amaziah the priest of Beth-el sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land. Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: but prophesy not again any more at Beth-el: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court.

Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdsman, and a gatherer of sycomore fruit: and the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.

Now therefore hear thou the word of the Lord: Thou sayest, Prophesy not against Israel, and drop not thy word against the house of Isaac. Therefore thus saith the Lord; Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a

polluted land: and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land.—Amos vii. 10-17.

In these words we have types of two classes of priests who are ever found amongst the people.

I. The CONVENTIONAL priest of a people. Amaziah was the recognized, authorized, conventional priest of Bethel—the chief priest of the royal sanctuary of the calves at Bethel. He was the recognized religious teacher: a kind of archbishop. We find this man doing three things which such conventional priests have done in all ages, and are doing now.

First: He was in close intimacy with the king. He "sent to Jeroboam King of Israel." Conventional priests have always an eye upward, always toward kings and those in authority; they have generally proved ready to obey their behests, study their caprices, and wink at their abominations. In their prayers they will often insult the Omniscient by describing their royal masters, whatever their immoralities, as "our most religious," "our most gracious sovereign." As a rule, they are the mere creatures of kings.

Secondly: He seeks to expel an independent teacher from the dominion of the king. He seeks to do this in two ways, (1) By appealing to the king. He does this in a spirit that has ever characterized his class:—by bringing against Amos the groundless charge of treason. "Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words." By a base slander he endeavours to

influence the king against the true teacher. He does this, (2) By alarming the prophet. "Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: but prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court." It does not appear that the king took any notice of the message which this authorized religious teacher had sent him concerning Amos; hence, in order to carry out his malignant purpose, he addresses the prophet and says, "O thou seer, go, flee thee away." Not imagining that Amos could be actuated by any higher principle than that of selfishness, which reigned in his own heart, the priest advised him to consult his safety by fleeing across the frontier into the kingdom of Judah, where he might obtain his livelihood by the unrestrained exercise of his prophetic gifts.

Here then we have, in this Amaziah, a type of many so-called authorized religious teachers of a country. Two feelings inspire them—a miserable *servility* towards their rulers, and a cruel *envy* towards their religious rivals. They want to sweep the land of all schismatics. Thank God, the days of the Amaziahs, through the advancement of popular intelligence, are drawing to a close!

II. Here we have the GENUINE priest of a people. Amos seems to have been a prophet not nationally recognized as such. He was no professional prophet. Observe three things

concerning this prophet. First: He is not ashamed of his humble origin. "I was no prophet," that is, I am not a prophet by profession, "neither was I a prophet's son." By the son of a prophet he means a disciple or pupil. He had not studied in any prophetic college. On the contrary, I am nothing but a poor labouring man:—"an herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit." No true prophet is ever ashamed of his origin, however humble. As a rule the greatest teachers of the world have struggled up from the regions of poverty and obscurity. From the lower grades of social life the Almighty generally selects His most eminent servants; "not many mighty does He call." Secondly: He is conscious of the Divinity of his mission. "The Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel." Amos seems to have had no doubt at all as to the fact that the Lord called him. How he was called does not appear. When God calls a man to work, the man knows it. No argument will convince him to the contrary. The conventional teacher may say, "You are unauthorized, unrecognized, unordained, you have intruded yourself into the holy calling." But the true teacher knows when he is divinely called, and under the impression he carries on his work. "The Lord took me as I followed the flock." Thirdly: In the name of Heaven he denounces the conventional priest. In return for this rebellion against Jehovah, Amos foretells for the priest the punishment which

will fall upon him when the judgment shall come upon Israel, meeting his words, "Thou sayest, Thou shalt not prophesy" with the keen retort, "Thus saith Jehovah." The punishment is thus described in verse 17: "Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city," i.e. at the taking of the city she will become a harlot through violation. His children also would be slain by the foe, and his landed possessions assigned to others, viz., to the fresh settlers in the land. He himself, viz., the priest, would die in an unclean land, that is to say, in the land of the Gentiles; in other words, would be carried away captive, and that with the whole nation, the carrying away of which is repeated by Amos in the words which the priest had reported

to the king (verse 11) as a sign that what he has prophesied will assuredly stand.—*Delitzsch.*

CONCLUSION: To which class of teachers dost thou belong, my brother? That represented by Amaziah, who, though recognized by his king and country as the true teacher, was nevertheless destitute of loyalty to the one true God and the spirit of true philanthropy and honest manhood, or that represented by Amos, who although a poor labourer, unrecognized by his country as a true teacher, yet was called of God and manfully fulfilled his Divine mission?

Heaven multiply in this country and throughout the world religious teachers of this Amos type!

Homiletical Breviaries.

No. CLXX.

Subject: THE DIVINITY OF A TRUE LIFE.

"My soul followeth hard after Thee: Thy right hand upholdeth me."
—PSALM lxxiii. 8.

The subject suggested by the text is the divinity of a true life; and it supplies us with two remarks on the subject. I. God is the SUPREME OBJECT of a true life. "My soul followeth hard after Thee." "After Thee," First: As the *centre of my affections*. I want to fix, settle my heart, with all its varied sympathies and affections, in Thee. Thou art the original centre of my soul; but I have lost Thee, and now my intense desire is to come back to Thee. "After Thee," Secondly: As the *guide of my life*. I want a guide; I have lost my way; the path is intricate, perilous, and

very dark. I press towards Thee as my guide. "Oh, guide me with Thy counsel." Father, take me by the hand. "After Thee," Thirdly: As the *companion of my heart*. I want a friend, some one who understands me, can sympathize with me, calm my agitated nature. My sense of desolation sinks me like lead, saddens me as a thunder cloud. I follow hard after Thee as the centre of my affections, the guide of my life, and the companion of my heart. After Thee; not after riches or pleasures, not after Thine, but after Thee. I want Thee. "My heart and my flesh crieth for the living God." This is the great characteristic of a true life, the soul following hard after God. God, the one object arresting the vision, engrossing the sympathies, and stimulating the activities of the soul. II. God is the SUSTAINING POWER of a true life. "Thy right hand upholdeth me." First: "Thy right hand" in the blessings of material nature. Secondly: "Thy right hand" in the beneficent influence of Providence. Thirdly: "Thy right hand" in the moral forces of the Gospel. It is God's power alone that can sustain the soul in its strugglings after life.

CONCLUSION: God is everything to the true—the Alpha, the Omega, the beginning, and the end." Its constant language is, "The Lord is my portion"; "hitherto hath the Lord helped me"; "By the grace of God I am what I am"; "This God is my God for ever and ever," etc., etc.

No. CLXXI.

Subject: THE MANIFOLDNESS OF CHRIST'S DOMINION.

"On His head were many crowns."—REV. xix. 12.

"Crowns" are man's emblems of the highest dignities and powers; and in accommodation to our poor thoughts, Christ is here spoken of as having many "crowns;" and truly He has many dominions. I. The dominion of MATTER is His. (1) *Inorganic* matter is under His control. Atoms, mountains, rivers, oceans, planets, suns, and systems. He controls the atoms, He heaves the ocean, He rolls the heavenly orbs along, He is the master of all chemical and mechanical forces. (2) *Organic* matter is under His control. (a) All vegetable life; the tiniest blades, up to the hugest monarchs of the forest, are under Him. He quickens, sustains, develops them. (b) All animal life—all that teem in earth, and air, and sea—He is the master of all life forces. II. The

dominion of MIND is His. (1) All mind in *heaven*. He inspires and directs all the hierarchies of celestial worlds. (2) All minds on *earth*. The thoughts, impulses, passions, and purposes of mankind are under His masterhood. He originates the good and controls the bad. (3) All mind in *hell*. The strongest spirit in hell is controlled by Him, although against his will.

CONCLUSION: How impious, how futile, how monstrously foolish is it for man to oppose the great Redeemer! He does reign, He must reign, and will reign for ever. He will reign over you, either with your will or against your will.

No. CLXXII.

Subject: THE GODLY MAN.

"Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember Thee in Thy ways."—ISAIAH lxiv. 5.

Notice, I. The Godly man's CONDUCT. A description is here given of a godly man's conduct, First: He *worketh righteousness*. He does not confine himself to any department of action, it may be manual, commercial, literary, scientific, professional; but in all he "worketh righteousness." He pursues righteousness through all the various departments of activity. He is right in all; rectitude, and not expediency, is his law. Secondly: He is *happy* in his work. He "rejoiceth and worketh." A man that worketh righteousness is sure to be happy; his affections will be harmonious, his conscience will smile on him, his God will bless him. There is no happiness but in work; and there is no happiness in work that is not the work of "righteousness." The works of righteousness keep heaven in bloom, music, and sunshine. Thirdly: He *remembers God* in all. "Those that remember Thee in Thy ways." God has His ways and His methods of action, and they are manifold. He remembers God in His ways in nature, in His ways in the government of man, in His ways in the dispensations of redeeming grace. Such is the description here given of a godly man. He works, he is not indolent; he works righteousness, he is not unjust in his activities; he works happily, he rejoiceth in all he does; and he remembers God in all his ways. Notice, II. The Godly man's COMPANION. "Thou (that is God) meetest him that rejoiceth." Such men have meetings with God. First: *Conscious* meetings. All men meet with God, but they are unconscious of

it. The good man knows it; he can say, "God is in this place." Secondly: *Loving* meetings. He meets him as the father met the prodigal son on his return, 'overflowing with love and joy. Thirdly: *Preparatory* meetings. He meets them to prepare them for a meeting with Him that shall be uninterrupted, beatific, and eternal.

CONCLUSION: What a noble life is the life of Godliness! Godliness, it is true, is "profitable unto all things," etc.

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

HUMAN LIFE.—I have read of an engine of torture which a heartless despotism, in certain age and land, invented and employed. It was of the following description:—It was a cell which at the prisoner's first entrance presented an air of comfort and ease, but which was so formed that it gradually and slowly contracted its dimensions; it grew smaller and darker every day. When the prisoner first observed this he grew alarmed; his alarm was intensified as he observed the sides getting closer and closer together. At length it touched him on all hands, proceeded on until it crushed him to death. Not an unsuitable emblem of human life is this. At the outset our sphere spreads out, and presents many charms; light streams out on us from all quarters, and many beauties fascinate and thrill; but gradually the sphere darkens and contracts, narrower and more shadowy it becomes, until we feel pressed down into the deep dark grave.

THE HUMAN MIND is something like seed in the vegetable kingdom. The grain contains life and unbounded possibilities of increase; but unless it find suitable soil, showers, and sunbeams, the vital principle is buried alive, buried in the shell. Amidst the thousands of our miners who are working underground, and half-starved labourers toiling on our farms, there are multitudes possessing brilliant natural capacities. There are mute Miltons and sleeping Shakespeares; but they are buried for the lack of opportunity.

A GREAT MAN, I take it, is a man so inspired and permeated with the ideas of God and the Christly spirit as to be too magnanimous for vengeance and too unselfish to seek his own ends. He is the greatest man who cherishes in his heart and embodies in his life most of the spirit of Him "who conquered when He fell." There have been men in society in all ages—their number is greater now perhaps than ever, and

they are destined to increase until they fill the world—who accept the principles of Christ as the rules of life and the test of character. These men see no real glory in the achievements of campaigns or the gorgeous pomp of earthly thrones. To them coronets and crowns, stars and worldly honours, are mere toys, after which the carnal and worldly scramble. These men see no greatness where there is not goodness, and honour men in proportion as they see embodied in their lives the everlasting principles of love and rectitude. These men stand by and look down with a sublime pity upon the thoughtless thousands who hurrah the greatest fiends if robed in martial splendour or imperial purple. These men will have to write the history of the race one day, and they will reverse the judgment of old historians. The men whom past annalists held up to be worshipped by posterity, will be exhibited for universal execration. The Sermon upon the Mount will be the light by which future historians will guide their pen; a light, this, which makes the splendours of royalties and warriors as contemptible as the flickerings of a rushlight in the open sun of day. The greatness of the world's great men is but theatrical—brilliant in the gas-light of conventional thought, but only tinselled finery in the day-blaze of Gospel intelligence.

THE TRUE MINISTRY.—An earnest ministry is *living*. It is not mere preaching or service, occasional or merely systematic; it is the influence of the whole man.

THE mission of true greatness is to minister; not to master—to give, not to govern; its sceptre is love, not force; its sword is truth, not steel; its throne is in the heart, and its empire over souls.

THE MIND-CULTURING POWER OF PROVIDENCE.—We come into this world with minds capable of receiving and naturally craving for those truths which nature seems organized to impart. Nature is the husbandman of the soul. The history of the providential economy under which we are placed indicates the same fact. Providence acts here as the husbandman: it ploughs and harrows, uproots, plants, and waters. And still more the mission of Christ to the world attests the same fact. He is the great "sower" whom the great God sent into the world. He came to make the moral wilderness bloom as Eden.

CONCENTRATED THOUGHT.—If you would bring the beams of the sun into scorching flame, you must draw them to a focus. And if you would make the great truths of religion kindle repentance within you, you must focalize them by a process of intense thinking.

DISCIPLINE.—As vines bear the better for bleeding, and flowers emit a more delicious aroma after having been pelted with the rain, so will the true soul improve by afflictions. As the frosty winds of winter kill pernicious vermin and grubs, so afflictions to the good tend to destroy the depravities of the heart.

THE POWER OF USEFULNESS.—Man's power of usefulness is cumulative; the more good he

does, the more his capacity for usefulness increases. There is no wearing out in the cause of spiritual usefulness. The more useful a man has been, the more useful he may yet be. His career is not like the growth of life, which, after its culmination, weakens and dies, but like a river, becomes stronger and stronger as it proceeds to its destination.

PREJUDICE.—Prejudices are fetters that enslave the intellect, clouds that obscure the vision, bolts that shut out the truth.

REVERENCE.—When a man loses reverence for the supreme, he loses the soil in which alone the seeds of virtue and truth can grow within him. He loses the ear by which alone he can catch the Divine harmonies of nature, the interpreting faculty

by which alone he can reach and feel the moral meaning of life.

REPROOF.—"Reprehension is not an act of butchery, but an act of surgery," says Lecker. There are those who confound bluntness with honesty, insolence with straightforwardness. They pride themselves on a coarse outspokenness. The true reprover is of a different metal, and his words fall not like the rushing hail-storm, but like the gentle dew. They do not wound like stones, but insinuate and heal like oil. The hail of reproof, says an old writer, must be well oiled in kindness before it is driven home.

TRIALS.—As fire separates particle from particle in the densest substances, great sorrows separate soul from soul.

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

THE TREASURY OF DAVID. By C. H. SPURGEON. Vol. IV. London: Passmore & Alabaster, 4, Paternoster Buildings.

We are very pleased to receive another volume of Mr. Spurgeon's valuable work on the Psalms, which extends from lxxix. to ciii. The volume is, so far as bulk, paper, type, are concerned, exactly like its predecessors; and, so far as we have been able to look into it, the quality seems as good. We cannot say that the author's expositions always agree with our ideas as to what the text contains; for indeed, at times,

he seems to find piety in David's imprecations, and the Messiah in utterances that appear to us utterly at variance with the spirit, character, and teaching of Christ, as He appears in the pages of His four biographers. Notwithstanding this, we are both amazed and delighted with the fertility of his intellect, the freshness of his spirit, and the clearness and vigour of his style. On the whole, we know of no expounder of this portion of the Divine Book who has revealed a greater power for penetrating the mind of the varied psalmists, seizing their ideas and feelings, and bringing them out in language that every Englishman can understand. There are no waste words, no dull sentences, no ambiguous expressions: all is conciseness, animation, and transparency. We attach far more value to the author's own interpretations than to most of the writers he quotes. Indeed, some of the thoughts of the old authors he introduces seem to us grotesque, irrelevant, and often stupid. In this volume, however, he appears to have been more happy in his choice of the sources from which he makes his extracts. He has more modern men—men of higher scholarship and wider sweep of thought. We are thankful that Mr. Spurgeon has, notwithstanding his other great labours and his occasional physical indisposition, been able to proceed thus far with this important undertaking; we trust that he will be preserved to complete, what will be a monument to future times of his own signal ability and devotional diligence, as well as a blessing to the men that are to be.

SERMONS ON THE EPISTLES AND GOSPELS. By REV. ISAAC WILLIAMS, B.D.
Vol. I. Rivingtons, London, Oxford, and Cambridge.

"The following discourses," says the author, "although they have been preached as sermons, yet are in fact hardly worthy of the name; for they consist of a series of commentaries on the Epistle and Gospel for the day, with such practical or devotional reflections as the continued passages of each give rise to. They were indeed undertaken in consequence of a request made to the writer, that he would publish some exposition on the Epistles and Gospels, such as might be suitable for private or domestic reading on the Sunday. And they were thrown into the form of sermons, not only for the immediate occasions on which they were so used, but also as the most convenient mode in which they could appear for the purpose required." Here are forty-five discourses, extending from the First Sunday in Advent to the Tuesday in Whitsun-week, and they are all of a devotional and expository character. You have no elaborate discussions, no striking originality, no hypothesis; but you have calm reflection and Christian teaching. We want more of this expository preaching—the preaching which St. Chrysostom described as that in which "God speaks much and man little." Profound and growing is our conviction that this mode of preaching is at once the most legitimate, powerful, and indispensable. Whence come the ideas

necessary to work out the spiritual regeneration of mankind? Are they born of the human brain? No. The thoughts of the greatest of human thinkers are, like their authors, imperfect and frail. None of them are solar rays; they fall as cold moonbeams upon the minds of their contemporaries. God's ideas are the only soul-vivifying forces in our fallen world; and these ideas are contained in the histories, the metaphors, the conversations, discourses, gospels, and epistles of His holy books. It is only as they are brought out of the text and flashed into souls that men are spiritually and really helped. This is the work of *true* preaching. Hence we heartily recommend such sermons.

CHRISTIAN TRUTH AND MODERN OPINION. New York: Thomas Whittaker.

The preface will explain the nature and aim of this work:—"The following course of sermons was given during the last winter, under the auspices of an association of clergymen in the Episcopal Church. There will be found such an order in the topics, and such essential agreement in the line of Christian thought, as to give them place in one volume; yet each author has freely written his own convictions, and is alone responsible for his sermon. It is hoped that this publication may do somewhat toward that harmony of Christian faith with science which is no dream, but one of the most real aims of all scholars in our one-sided times." The contents of this volume are:—The Christian Doctrine of Providence, by C. S. Henry, D.D.; The Christian Doctrine of Prayer, by Hugh Miller Thompson, D.D.; Moral Responsibility and Physical Law, by E. A. Washburn, D.D.; The Relation of Miracles to the Christian Faith, by H. Rylance, D.D.; The Oneness of Scripture, by William R. Huntington, D.D.; Immortality, by the Rt. Rev. S. M. Clarke, D.D., LL.D.; Evolution and a Personal Creator, by John Cotton Smith, D.D. These are all very able discourses, and we are glad to find our old friend Dr. Rylance in such good company and acquitting himself with his wonted ability.

HANDBOOK OF REVIVALS. By HENRY C. FISH, D.D. London: Passmore & Alabaster.

We are not called upon to pronounce upon the popular ideas on the question of religious revivals, nor on the modern methods employed to produce and promote them. We will not utter a word against any effort that will tend in any way to break in upon the awful moral monotony of modern men in relation to the great vital questions of duty and destiny. Society on all hands, as a rule, seems utterly indifferent. The book before us is useful, very useful, as containing some striking facts connected with the spiritual history of mankind, and revealing methods and agencies that have proved successful in awakening men to a consideration of their spiritual condition. At the present moment many will read it with interest. For ourselves we know of no work on the question of

Revivals so unexceptionally good, so morally mighty as "Finney's Revivals." We read those lectures when at college, and never shall we forget the effect they produced upon our own heart: they have been working in us from that day to this, and they have suggested many a train of thought and given us many an impulse to work in the cause of humanity and Christ.

A SYSTEM OF CHRISTIAN RHETORIC. By GEORGE WINFRED HERVEY, M.A.
London: Houlston & Sons.

This work, says the author, may be distinguished from others of its class by a number of noticeable points. It is not an essay, or collection of lectures on selected parts of the subject; nor is it a record of individual experience and advice; neither is it a special treatise composed in the interest of a church, or sect, or seminary, although, as the footnotes bear witness, it is largely indebted to sterling works of all these kinds. It is rather a *system*, treating of all the prominent branches of Christian Rhetoric and of their relations no less to one another than to things that are radical and even foundational. Yet this system is not theoretical only, but practical as well. The present work, he says, is a well-meant attempt to build a system of sacred rhetoric on what he has been led to regard as its only proper foundation. The work consists of four books. The subject of the first is: Inspiration in Preaching; the subject of the second is: Invention in Preaching, under which the author treats of the matter of sermons as determined by their object, and the form of sermons as determined by their method; the third book is on Style, under which he treats various forms of figurative language; the fourth book is on Elocution. It is a book for preachers, and deserves the study of every one aspiring to the sacred office. We heartily recommend it.

THE MYSTERY OF THE TEMPTATION. By Rev. W. H. HUTCHINS, M.A.
Rivingtons, London, Oxford, and Cambridge.

The subjects of these lectures are:—The Entrance into Temptation, The Fall, The Personality of Satan, The First Temptation, The Second Temptation, The Third Temptation, The End of the Temptations. These subjects are treated with great philosophic discrimination and religious reverence. The author seizes all the points connected with this subject, searches them in the light of reason and the Gospel, and devotes to them much moral reflection, spiritually suggestive and stimulating.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION. By ASA MAHAN, D.D. Introduction by GEORGE WARNER. London: F. E. Longley, 39, Warwick Lane.

The venerable author of this work, Dr. Mahan, informs us that the views he here sets forth on Christian Perfection, he embraced forty years

ago. Some of the views set forth in this little work may be questionable, but one thing is certain—that every real Christian, that is every Christy soul, is perfect in the *principle* of his character. What is the *essence* of holiness? *Supreme love to God*. Where that is, there is the perfect germ, root, fountain of character. You can add nothing to it, you can take nothing from it; it is perfect in itself. Of course, the susceptibilities and faculties of the soul are not perfect in strength, harmony, or development, but the thing that works them—that is supreme love, that is perfect. Mr. Warner's introduction is clear, earnest, and practical.

THE SUNDAY TEACHER'S TREASURY. London: 61, Paternoster Row.

This Treasury contains much valuable matter, in the form of exposition, anecdote, and practical reflection. Sunday-school teachers would do well to procure it as their handbook. THE HIVE. VOL. VII. Elliot Stock, 62, Paternoster Row. The remarks made on the preceding volume are applicable to this.

JOHN THE BAPTIST. The Congregational Union Lecture for 1874. By HENRY ROBERT REYNOLDS, D.D. London: Hodder & Stoughton, Paternoster Row.

Dr. Reynolds's old Cheshunt students will everywhere welcome with enthusiasm this noble volume. For to them, generally, it will recall and emphasize the lofty tone of the teaching and influence with which it was their privilege to be familiar; whilst for those of later sessions it will doubtless gather up much that was choicest in their hours of collegiate study. We say this, not unmindful that the work deserves and must command a hundredfold wider circle of readers than that. It is so unique in its subject,—and that a subject that has been strangely neglected,—and it is so masterly in its method, that it will surely become one of the books sought by all who would expound, or even understand, the connection of Christ with the Old Testament, or, what is of yet deeper importance, His connection with the everyday problems of sin, and righteousness, and hope, of which John was emphatically the "*vox clamantis*." For our author deals with the life-work of John the Baptist, not only as "the clasp of the two Covenants," but as a theme by which we are "thrown into the skirts of the great storm which is thundering over every idea and institution of Christendom." And in dealing with this two-fold aspect of the great Baptist's mission, we have here some six hundred pages, on which the historic, the critical, the philosophic, the theologic, the moral, are finely interwoven, by an accomplished, wide-minded, and eloquent thinker, in arguments of keenest interest and of gravest present-day importance.



A HOMILY
ON
*Lessons Suggested by our Lord's
Choice of His First Disciples.**

SCHLEIERMACHER IX.

IF the Redeemer Himself was in the first instance able to trace the outlines of the Gospel only in the souls of the disciples, then the choice of these disciples, by whom the power of His teaching was to be carried forth to work upon the world, must be one of the most momentous events in His life; and if this be true, then that choice must be also one of the most important subjects of our devout contemplation.

It is to be remarked at the outset, that of the two disciples who here followed Christ, the one whose name is not given was no other than the Apostle John himself, who wrote these words. This is obvious from the way in which he describes himself throughout his gospel, and from the fact that none but an eye-witness could so ex-

JOHN I. 35-44.

actly know and observe the unimportant circumstances in connection with that first acquaintance with Christ; as, for instance, the words, the hour, and so forth.

Presupposing this, let us consider *what important observations and truths we may draw from this choice of the Saviour, by which He formed to Himself the first circle of disciples.*

First: *The Saviour formed the body of His disciples of men of entirely opposite qualities of mind and heart.*

In *John* dwells preponderantly the gentle, tranquil, happy; he appears as the Saviour's nearer personal friend and favourite; he rests upon His bosom; it is his to hear the direction of the Baptist—"Behold the Lamb of God," in which the gentle, peaceful, character of Christ is alluded to.

With *Simon*, to whom Jesus says, "Thou shalt be called Cephas, or Peter," it is very different. He is a man of rock; a soul wherein the severe and harsh are in the ascendancy, which urges its way through all opposition and hurls back from it whatever obstructs its course.

In this difference between the first members of the Christian Church are reflected the contrasts of human character, which must therefore be necessary for the subsistence and growth of the kingdom of God.

Wherefore the answer to the question, What natural disposition (temperament) is the best? is this: *Every kind is good, if it is animated by the Spirit of God.* It is only excess and one-sidedness which produces here that which is imperfect.

There are many gifts, but there is one spirit. This grand word applies equally well to the multiplicity of natural endowments. Severity and mildness, fiery strength and patient tenderness, action and contemplation, may praise the Lord in equal measure, and are meant to do so; they each have their own destination, place, effect, which

throughout the whole kingdom of God are not to be dispensed with.

We do not find that the peculiarities of the disciples were diminished or smoothed off in any case to approximating equality; they remained different, as they were at the beginning.

So let every one be content with his gift; let him do what he can with it, and prize what another can do differently or more. Let no one look enviously upon the gift and power of another; by the united zeal of all in common for the same kingdom of God in the same love will all hold together; and let every one rejoice in the supplementary helps which come to him from all quarters.

But at the same time let every one bear and forbear with others, since no one is a perfect temple of the Spirit of God.

The persistency of Peter is to be seen through the obstinacy of his denial. John, too, has not escaped the general human lot, of having faults of his own, such as are more immediately connected with his disposition of mind. Yet both disciples are *friends*, and we find them in the last section of the evangelic history still specially near together.

Let us hold together in Christ, that each may be helpfully near to the other in circumstances which precisely for him are not dangerous, but are dangerous to the other.

Secondly: *We see that our Saviour, in the number of His first disciples, had some who by word or deed gained great renown, but also some of whom scarcely anything but the mere name has come down to us.*

The glory of John and Peter in the Christian Church could only pass away with the Church itself; Andrew and Philip were also called, chosen, or sent forth, but little more than their names has come down to us.

Since the Lord cannot have received as His disciples

either any that were unworthy or any that could be dispensed with, we are hence to learn, that even the quiet and unknown labourers in His Church are not to be overlooked and not to be despised; and therefore among Christians, as such, in general *no such distinction of renowned and obscure is to be of any value.*

The difference of outward splendour in the one case and obscurity in the other, lies not in the difference of their inward worth; to this that splendour can make no addition, and this obscurity no diminution.

That difference lies in the outward circumstances, which, in relation to the inward qualification, are unessential and accidental.

That difference lies also indeed in the inclination of the individual; one mind is called to come forth into prominence, another prefers to hide itself in obscurity; the one works with quick, strong decision of purpose, the other more slowly and more silently, but surely; the one is active upon the larger stage, the other in the circle of domestic life. Both are necessary; the splendour of him who is placed on high is ever merely the reflection of the light which thousands cast upon him. All, however, comes from the Lord.

Let us not be desirous of vain glory!

Thirdly: *From this choice we may learn, how the most important events of life so often begin in a quiet, unpretending manner.*

The human heart has the faulty desire to see that which is weighty and significant announcing itself as such at the very beginning; and if this is not the case it is seized with dejection, fear, and weakness.

Note the connection of this phenomenon with the love of the marvellous; and the opposition between this and the intelligent, even-tempered, and experience-loving mind.

How important it is for the work of the present, that we should think of the future with a mind uncorrupted, and take everything as it really is !

How important, to look less upon the outward,—see the first insignificant word here exchanged,—than upon the inward !

We have indeed the inward in the outward, if we therein find the Saviour. It needs not the great in the outward (as this is never given but to the few), in order to have the best—the Saviour.

Let nothing give us the measure of all dignity of life but fidelity and love to Christ ; *our* modest share in the work of the Lord too may and will give rise to something glorious ; let our joy in this, and our certainty of it, be to us a source of steadfastness in the conflict and a pledge of victory !—*Amen.*

W. E. COLLIER.

EJACULATORY PRAYER.—"Ejaculations are short prayers darted up to God on emergent occasions. They are the artillery of devotion, and their principal use is against the fiery darts of the devil. In barred havens, so choked up with the envious sands that great ships drawing many feet of water cannot come near, lighter and lesser pinnaces may freely and safely arrive. When we are time-bound, place-bound, or person-bound, so that we cannot compose ourselves to make a solemn prayer, this is the right instant for ejaculations, whether orally uttered or only poured forth inwardly to the heart. Ejaculations bind not men to any bodily observance, only being the spiritual half, which maketh them consistent with the prosecution of any other employment."—**FULLER.**

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Psalms.

Our Purpose.—Many learned and devout men have gone *philologically* through this *TANAKH*, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal *hermeneutics* of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough *homiletic* treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

Our Method.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1) The *History* of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2) *Annotations* of the passage. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase, or allusion that may occur.—(3) The *Assessment* of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is amongst the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4) The *Homiletics* of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavour so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately deduced, as to suggest such thoughts, and indicate such sermonizing methods, as may promote the proficiency of modern pulpit ministrations.

Subject: The Praiseworthy and the Faultworthy in Worship.

“O clap your hands, all ye people,” etc.—*PSALM* *xlvi.* 1-9.*

HISTORY.—Neither the author of this Psalm nor the occasion of its composition can be ascertained with certainty. If it is not the effusion of David's soul, it savours much of his spirit, and chimes in with most of his characteristic notes. Some say that it was composed to celebrate the triumphant achievements of Jehoshaphat over the Ammonites and Edomites, as recorded in 2 Chronicles *xx.* Others think it was composed for the dedication of the Temple, and sung during the procession; others conclude it was written at the removal of the ark to Zion; and some aver that it was produced in order to celebrate the destruction of Sennacherib and his army. What matters it? Moral and spiritual truths are alike independent of men and events. It is a song of worship dedicated to the chief Musician, to be chanted by the sons of Korah.

ANNOTATIONS: *Ver. 1.*—“O clap your hands.” This is one of nature's own universal acts to express the rush of high delight. “Shout unto God.” Another of nature's ways of expressing strong emotions of joy. “With the voice of triumph.” The note of victory is the highest note in the soul's scale of music. Such shouts were heard of old (2 Sam. *ii.* 15; 1 Chron. *xv.* 28; Job *xxxix.* 25, etc.).

* The previous Psalm was noticed on page 1 of present volume.

Ver. 2.—“*For the Lord most high is terrible.*” Jehovah is the Highest of the high, the unapproached and unapproachable One, “dwelling in light,” etc. “*Terrible.*” This does not mean that He is an Object of dread, but an Object of reverence; and reverence implies love, confidence, adoration. He is to be had in reverence of all those round about Him. “*He is a great King over all the earth.*” He is “the King of kings, and Lord of lords.”

Ver. 3, 4.—“*He shall subdue the people under us and the nations under our feet. He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom He loved.*” “He subdues people under us, and nations under our feet. He chose for us our inheritance, the pride of Jacob whom He hath loved.”—*Delitzsch*. What He has done is but an earnest of what He will do. *Canaan*—the pride, the glory of Jacob and of Israel—was chosen by the King of all the earth as the inheritance of His people. There are three good reasons why Jacob and Israel were proud of their country, their Holy Land: (1) On account of its superlative quality. No country under heaven excelled it in fertility and beauty. (2) On account of its spiritual advantages. It had its temple, priesthoods, Divine visions, angelic messengers, etc. etc. (3) On account of its being the special gift of God. They did not gain it by birthright or conquest, but it was a Divine gift. “He shall choose our inheritance.”

Ver. 5.—“*God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.*” “‘God has gone up with shouting, Jehovah with sound of trumpet.’ He is here described as returning to heaven after the conquest of His enemies and the rescue of His people; as in Psalm vii. 7 He does the same, after sitting in judgment on the nations, and asserting the right of His own people. See Psalm lxviii. 18, and compare Genesis xvii. 22, Judges xiii. 20. The shouting and sounding of the trumpet represent the ascension as a public and triumphant one. The ideal scene is typical of the actual ascension of our saviour.”—*Alexander*.

Ver. 6, 7.—“*Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.*” The poet here calls upon all to exult religiously in the reign of God; and this in truth is evermore the strongest cause and the highest obligation to joy. His reign is universal, righteous, and beneficent.

Ver. 8.—“*God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of His holiness.*” His holy throne. The throne of universal dominion is “a great white throne;” it has not a shadow or stain of moral pollution on it.

Ver. 9.—“*The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God: He is greatly exalted.*” “The princes of the peoples gathered themselves together—a people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of

the earth are Elohim's, very highly exalted is He."—*Delitzsch*. "The shields of the earth" mean the protectors of the people, which the rulers profess to be. They are in God's hand, they are His mere instruments.

ARGUMENT.—This psalm consists of two parts. The first part comprises the first five verses, and contains an exhortation to praise God, with a statement of the reasons. The second part embraces the last four verses, and also consists of an exhortation to praise God, with a statement of certain reasons.

HOMILETICS.—Homiletically, this psalm may be regarded as exhibiting the *praise-worthy* and the *fault-worthy* in worship. Man is a worshipper. This is a fact universally admitted, and which has been repeated a thousand times. The deepest craving of his soul is for worship, and in true worship alone he can find the healthy excitement and the full and felicitous development and exercise of all his powers. His excellences in worship are his primary excellences; his defects in worship are his most damnable and damning defects. This psalm may help us to point out the evil and the good connected with worship. Notice—

I. The PRAISE-WORTHY in worship. Three excellent things in worship appear in this psalm.

First: *Exultancy*. "O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God." "Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises unto our King, sing praises." There is no true worship where there is not rapture. Worship is not a passionless sentiment, still less an irksome duty or a formal service; it is the soul going out in the ecstasy of love, adoration, devotion. It is the soul, like the lark, leaving the clod, piercing the clouds, and losing itself in the raptures of a sunny universe. Among the reasons indicated in the psalm for this exultancy, is His supremacy over all the earth. "God is King over all the earth, sing praises," etc. This is a good reason. (1) Because His government of the world is founded upon the reason of things. (2) Because His government of the world is founded upon laws suited to the nature of His subjects. (3) Because His government of the world is exercised for purely benevolent ends. (4) Because His

government of the world affords opportunities for rebels to be restored.*

Secondly: *Enthusiasm*. Almost every expression in this psalm is indicative of intense emotion; no half-heartedness, but soul entireness; no lukewarmness; all is flame. All true worship is enthusiastic; religion is either everything or nothing, paramount or non-existent. In sooth, there is no service in which the soul can be thoroughly enthusiastic, but in worship. It cannot import its whole being into commerce, literature, politics, art, simply because many of its faculties are uninterested in any such sectional work; and conscience—its central force—must from its very constitution ever oppose its entire consecration to any or all such departments of action. But in worship all the faculties and susceptibilities of the soul are interested, and into it conscience pours its whole force. Hence in true worship there is always the whole heart, the whole soul pours forth itself in devotion. Call not prosy psalm-singing, dull prayers, ceremonial routine, worship; sooner call sunshine midnight, or ice fire. Worship is enthusiasm. The worship of heaven means not only entireness, but the intensity of entireness. As the celestial intelligences sing, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts," the very posts of the doors tremble at the vibrations of their voice.

Thirdly: *Monotheism*. There is neither pantheism nor polytheism in this religious poem; there is ONE, and One God only to be worshipped. He is the Lord, He is the King, He reigneth over the heathen, He sitteth upon the throne, He is all in all. The monotheism of the Bible is not only a strong argument for the superhuman origin of the Bible (as Henry Rogers has shown in his admirable work, the "*Congregational Lecture for 1873*"), but explains, justifies, and enforces the enthusiastic worship which it reveals and inculcates. There is one God, and only one; therefore the soul need not be distracted as to who is the object of worship, or how much feel-

* For an elaboration of these points see *Homilist*, Series II., vol. iii., page 20.

ing is to be thrown into the worship. The supremely good is to be loved supremely, the supremely great to be adored supremely, the supremely just to be obeyed supremely.

Fourthly: *Intelligence*. "Sing ye praises with understanding." The margin reads, "Every one that hath understanding," but the idea seems to be, Sing a song of praise that will convey instruction. Worship is not an unmeaning act, not a burst of blind passion; it is founded in the profoundest philosophy, it implies the grandest truths. The soul worshipping is the soul revealing itself, its relations, its obligations, its God. Notice—

II. The FAULT-worthy in worship. There are a few things connected with worship, as revealed in this psalm, which cannot be commended.

First: There is something like *selfishness* here. All peoples are called upon to praise God enthusiastically. Why? Not because of His inherent goodness, but because of His relative kindness; not because He is good to the universe at large, but because He is good to Jacob, Israel. He is thought of here as putting the enemies of Israel "under their feet," "choosing their inheritance," and as the tutelar divinity of Israel. Worship may begin in gratitude, may spring from a sense of God's personal kindness; but it only becomes virtuous and noble as it rises into self-oblivious adoration. The soul only truly worships as it becomes transported with the idea of God, and feels that He is the All In All.

Secondly: There is something like *revenge* here. "He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet." And again, "God reigneth over the heathen;" and again, "The shields of the earth belong unto God," which means, the rulers of the earth are in His hand. All these utterances, I think, savour too much of the spirit of revenge, and even love of power and conquest, to chime in with the highest ideas of worship. But, alas! such elements as these mingle too often in the highest worship of earth. When these are entirely expelled from our hearts, then do we become fully qualified to join in the worship of the better world. Oh, hasten

the time when all men in all places shall worship God, "who is a spirit, in spirit and in truth!"

"Spirit! whose life-sustaining presence fills
An ocean, central depths, by man untried,
Thou for Thy worshippers hast sanctified
All place, all time! The silence of the hills
Breathes veneration; founts and choral rills
Of these are murmuring. To its inmost glade,
The living forest with thy whisper thrills;
And there is holiness on every shade.
Yet must the thoughtful soul of man invest
With dearer consecration those pure fanes
Which, severed from all sound of earth's unrest,
Hear naught but suppliant or adoring strains
Rise heavenward. Ne'er may rock or cave possess
Their claim on human hearts to tenderness."

Mrs. F. D. Hemans.

THE ALMOND TREE.—It often blossoms in February, and this early activity is repeatedly alluded to in the Bible. Jeremiah opens his heavenly visions thus: "The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Jeremiah what seest thou? And I said, I see the rod of an almond tree. Then said the Lord, Thou hast well seen; for I will hasten my word to perform it." Just as this tree hastens to bud and blossom long before any other has begun to awake out of the repose of winter, and before it has put forth its own leaves. The same thing is implied, according to the general economy of miracles, in the selection of rods from this tree by Moses to be laid up in the tabernacle in order to settle the controversy in regard to the family that should be clothed with the priestly office. "And it came to pass that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and behold the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." This was miraculous rapidity certainly; but a rod was selected for the purpose from that tree which, in its natural development, is the most expeditious of all. And not only do the blossoms appear on it suddenly, but the fruit sets at once, and appears even while the flowers are yet on the tree—buds, blossoms, and almonds together on the same branch, as on this rod of Moses. In that affecting picture of the rapid and inevitable approach of old age drawn by the royal preacher, it is said that the almond tree shall flourish, or blossom. The point of the figure is doubtless the fact that the white blossoms completely cover the whole tree, without any mixture of green leaves, for these do not appear until some time after. It is the expressive type of old age, whose hair is white as wool, unrelieved with any other colour.—"THE LAND AND THE BOOK."

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Job.

The Book of Job is one of the grandest sections of Divine Scripture. It has never yet, to our knowledge, been treated in a purely Homiletic method for Homiletic ends. Besides many learned expositions on the book found in our general commentaries, we have special exegetical volumes of good scholarly and critical worth; such as Drs. Barnes, Wemyss, Mason Goode, Noyes Lee, Deltassch, and Herman Hedwick Bernard: the last is in every way a masterly production. For us, therefore, to go into philology and verbal criticism, when such admirable works are available to all students, would be superfluous, if not presumption. Ambiguous terms, when they occur, we shall of course explain, and occasionally suggest an improved rendering; but our work will be chiefly, if not entirely, Homiletic. We shall essay to bring out from the grand old words those Divine verities which are true and vital to man as man in all lands and ages. These truths we shall frame in an order as philosophic and suggestive as our best powers will enable us to do; and this in order to help the earnest preachers of God's Holy Word.

Subject: The Third Speech of Eliphaz. (4.) The Admonitory Section.

"Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace," etc.—Job xxii. 21-30.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS: Ver. 21.—"*Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.*" "*Acquaint now thyself with Him, and thou shalt prosper; therefore by these things good shall come unto thee.*"—*Dr. Bernard.* The idea is, Make Him thy Friend, and thou shalt have peace and prosperity.

Ver. 22.—"*Receive, I pray thee, the law from His mouth, and lay up His words in thy heart.*" This translation is so good it scarcely admits of improvement. Receive into thy mind, and entertain in thy heart His precepts, so that they may rule thee.

Ver. 23, 24, 25.—"*If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles. Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks. Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver.*" Here Eliphaz states what he considers necessary for Job to do in order to extricate himself from his difficulties and to obtain peace and prosperity. He must return in heart to the Almighty, renounce all iniquity, banish it from his tents, and count worldly wealth as nothing compared with the possession of his Maker's friendship. He should regard gold as dust and the fine gold of Ophir as the pebbles in the brooks in comparison with having the Almighty as his treasure.

Ver. 26.—"*For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God.*" Here he begins to state the immense advantages that would recur to him by turning to the Almighty and counting worldly wealth as comparatively worthless. By doing this he

would experience a high delight in the Almighty and lift up his face to Him in confidence and love.

Ver. 27, 28.—“*Thou shalt make thy prayer unto Him, and He shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows. Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee : and the light shall shine upon thy ways.* There are other advantages which he promises Job if he would only follow his advice. His prayers would be answered, his vows be accomplished, his purposes realized and established, and the light of prosperity shine upon his path.

Ver. 29.—“*When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and He shall save the humble person.*” Still another advantage, which is that he would become qualified to encourage the sad and the dejected. The rendering of Elzas gives this idea of the passage, “When men are cast down thou wilt say, Cheer up, for the dejected He will save.”

Ver. 30.—“*He shall deliver the island of the innocent : and it is delivered by the pureness of thine hands.*” “He shall rescue him who is not guiltless and he is rescued by the purity of thy hands.”—*Delitzsch*. “Many a man who has deserved to incur the wrath of God shall be delivered by thy intercession and prayer as soon as by the purity of thy hands thou shalt again be received into the favour and grace of God.”—*Bernard*.

HOMILETICS:—This is what we have called the *admonitory* section of this speech of Eliphaz to Job. The other sections, viz., the theological, recriminatory, and historical, have already been noticed. The great subject which Eliphaz urges on Job here, is spiritual reformation, a thorough change in his heart and life in relation to God. Of all reformations this is the greatest; it is vital. All other reformations, political, social, or religious, are worthless to man without this moral reformation of soul. We are far enough from admitting that Eliphaz was right in assuming that Job was not a spiritually renewed man, and that he required such an admonition as this, albeit his ideas of the nature and advantages of spiritual reformation, as set forth in his language, well deserve the attention of all men. Observe then,—

I. The **NATURE** of a true spiritual reformation as here set forth. His language embraces four ideas concerning it.

First: *Reconciliation to God*. “Acquaint now thyself with Him.” And in the twenty-third verse, “If thou return to the Almighty.” Men in their unregenerate state are out of sym-

pathy with their Maker. There is an estrangement of soul, a moral distance: this is the guilt, this is the ruin of mankind. The great moral want of the world is friendship with the Creator. This is what Christ came into the world to accomplish; His mission was "to reconcile the world unto Himself." In reconciliation between man and man there is generally a mutual concession; each acknowledges his fault, and overcomes within him some amount of ill-feeling. But no such mutual concession is connected with the restoration of friendship between man and God. The Almighty has nothing to concede; He has given no offence, and no unkind feeling ever has existed in His mind; He has always been full of love. "We beseech you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God."

Another idea which his language embraces concerning spiritual reformation is—

Secondly: *Practical regard to the Divine precepts.* "Receive, I pray thee, the law from His mouth and lay up His words in thine heart."

Shut not up thy heart against His law, but receive it, enshrine and cherish it in thine heart, so that thine obedience be not merely outward but inward; not occasional but constant. Put thy being under the reign of heavenly laws. All genuine spiritual reformation implies this; it is virtually seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness; it is coming under His reign, enthroning Him as the moral Monarch. No man is a really reformed man, who does not feel that the kingdom of God is within him; and the kingdom of God is love, peace, joy, growth, righteousness. Under His reign, and under the reign of no other power, the soul advances in liberty and light, power, influence, dignity, and blessedness. Another idea which his language embraces concerning spiritual reformation is:—

Thirdly: *Renunciation of all iniquity.* "Thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles." There is no reformation where sin is cherished, or where it is allowed to linger. There must be the denying of ungodliness and worldly lusts, the crucifying of the old man. The work of a truly re-

formed man is to "put away sin"—to put it away wherever he finds it, not only in his own life but in his circle. Let no man consider himself regenerated or reformed who does not put away iniquity from his tabernacles. It was to clear the world of sin that Christ came. He "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." This is the great work of all true good men; they battle against sin wherever it appears, whether in Churches, governments, commerce, literature. The other idea which his language embraces concerning spiritual reformation is—

Fourthly: *Estimating the best things as worthless in comparison with God.* "Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brook. Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver." The spiritually reformed man counts all his worldly treasures as worthless; gold to him is mere dust, even the gold of Ophir is no more to him than are the pebbles of the brooks. His gold and his silver is the Almighty Himself, "the Almighty shall be Thy defence" (*margin*, gold). God is the gold—the supreme good—of all true souls. Their language is, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is nought on earth I desire beside Thee."

Though Eliphaz probably missed his mark in urging this spiritual reformation on Job, he evidently had clear conceptions. To him spiritual reformation meant fellowship with God, practical regard for the Divine precepts, renunciation of all evil, and the esteeming of all worldly wealth as worthless in comparison to a loving acquaintance with the Almighty.

Observe then—

II. The **ADVANTAGES** of a true spiritual reformation, as here set forth. Eliphaz says, that if Job would only act out his counsel he should enjoy signal advantages. "Thereby good shall come unto thee." What is the "good" he refers to? He specifies several things.

First: *Restoration of lost blessings.* "Thou shalt be built up." All thy losses shall be repaired, and the breaches in thy fortune healed. How much Job had lost! All his property, children, health, social power. He was bereft of everything

almost that makes life worth having. Eliphaz here intimates that if he returned to God all these things would be restored, he would be "built up" again. Although not often does lost temporal good return to the sinner after his conversion, what Job had lost he more than recovered. He was "built up." He specifies another thing.

Secondly: *Delight in God.* "For then shalt thou have delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God." Job had been complaining of the Almighty; he seems to have lost the enjoyment of His presence, and his face was cast down in sadness. He here reminds him that with restoration to His friendship all this would pass away, and in its stead he would look up with joy and confidence to the Almighty, and delight in His fellowship. He specifies another thing.

Thirdly: *Answer to prayer.* "Thou shalt make thy prayer unto Him, and He shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows." Eliphaz believed in the efficacy of prayer, he believed that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Prayer is always answered where it leads to a submission to the Divine will; and true prayer always leads to this. He specifies another thing.

Fourthly: *Realization of purposes.* "Thou shalt also decree a thing and it shall also be established unto thee." Thou shalt form a plan or a purpose, and it shall not be frustrated. Thy purposes shall not be broken, they shall succeed. The idea is, whatever you take in hand shall prosper; if by prosperity is meant the good of the soul, then everything a godly man aims at and does, subserves his good. He specifies yet another thing.

Fifthly: *Power of usefulness.* "When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, there is lifting up; and He shall save the humble person." When other men are cast down, thou shalt say, Cheer up, and the dejected thou shalt save. It is ever true, that a man who is brought into loving sympathy with his Maker is endowed with the qualification to render the highest service to his race.

CONCLUSION. Though this admonition, urging spiritual reformation, was not exactly suitable for Job,—for he was conscious of no estrangement of heart from the Almighty,—it is suited to the vast majority of men in all communities and lands. Men are away from God, they are gone into the “far country” of practical atheism; and their return to the Almighty is a most urgent necessity and obligation. Whether this Eliphaz was an inspired man or not, he had such a deep insight into man’s spiritual needs and duties as to give him a claim to the study, ay, and even the imitation, of modern ministers. This old preacher was pre-eminently spiritual, pithy, and pointed.

Sermonic Glances at the Gospel of St. John.

As our purpose in the treatment of this Gospel is purely the development, in the briefest and most suggestive form, of Sermonic outlines, we must refer our readers to the following works for all critical inquiries into the author and authorship of the book, and also for any minute criticisms on difficult clauses. The works we shall especially consult are:—“Introduction to New Testament,” by Bleek; “Commentary on John,” by Tholuck; “Commentary on John,” by Hengstenberg; “Introduction to the Study of the Gospels,” by Westcott; “The Gospel History,” by Ebrard; “Our Lord’s Divinity,” by Liddon; “St. John’s Gospel,” by Oostersee; “Doctrine of the Person of Christ,” by Dörner; Lange; etc., etc.

Subject: Christ’s first two Discourses at the Feast of Tabernacles.

“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of His belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”—JOHN vii. 37-39.

EXPOSITION: Ver. 37.—“*In the last day, that great day of the feast.*”

The last day of the feast of Tabernacles was the closing feast day of

the year (Lev. xxiii. 39). It was distinguished and sanctified by very remarkable ceremonies. "The generally joyous character of this feast," says Olshausen, "broke out on this day into loud jubilation, particularly at the solemn moment when the priest, as was done on every day of this festival, brought forth, in golden vessels, water from the stream of Siloah, which flowed under the temple-mountain, and solemnly poured in on the altar. Then the words of Isaiah xli. 3, were sung; 'With joy shall we draw water out of the well of salvation,' and thus the symbolical reference of this act, intimated in ver. 39, was expressed." "So ecstatic," says Lightfoot, "was the joy with which this ceremony was performed, accompanied with sounds of trumpets, that it used to be said, whoever had not witnessed it had never seen rejoicing at all." "*Jesus stood and cried, saying.*" On this grand occasion He probably stood on some eminence, so that all could see Him, and uttered these sublime words,—"*If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.*" "If any man," Jew or gentile, "thirst," craving for a higher life, "let him come unto Me, and drink."

Ver. 38.—"*He that believeth on Me.*" Not on what men say about Me; not merely on the facts of My history; not on the doctrines of My teaching; but on Me—the living, loving, personal Son of God. "*As the Scripture hath said, out of His belly shall flow rivers of living water.*" The words, "as the Scripture hath said," point perhaps to no particular passage, but to the general strain of Scripture in relation to Himself. See Isa. lviii. 11, Joel iii. 18, Zech. xiv. 8, Ezek. xlvii. 1-11. Most of these Scriptures refer to waters issuing from beneath the Temple. The aim is, to apply the typical waters to their now-present Antitype, proclaiming that the hour of their grand fulfilment has come. "Out of belly" *Ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ*. Out of his body, or inner self: that is, out of his inner nature, shall flow the quickening influences of God.

Ver. 39.—"*But this spake He of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.*" "*For the Holy Ghost was not yet given.*" Beyond all doubt, the word "given," or some similar word, is the right supplement here, if we are to insert any supplement at all. In chap. xvi. 7, the Holy Ghost is represented, not only as the gift of Christ, but as a Gift the communication of which was dependent upon His own departure to the Father. Now, as Christ was not yet gone, so the Holy Ghost was not yet given. "*Because that Jesus was not yet glorified,*" This is one of those explanatory remarks of our Evangelist himself, which constitute a marked feature of this fourth Gospel. "The word, 'glorified' is here used advisedly, to teach the reader, not only that the departure of Christ to the Father was indispensable to the giving of the Spirit, but that this illustrious Gift, direct from the hands of the ascended Saviour, was God's intimation to the world,

that He whom it had cast out, crucified, and slain, was His Elect in whom His soul delighted; and it was through the smiting of that Rock, that the waters of the Spirit, for which the Church was waiting, and with pomp at the feast of tabernacles proclaiming its expectation, has gushed forth upon a thirsty world."—*Dr. Brown.*

HOMILETICS.—In these words, Christ appears as a *transcendent philanthropist*. "In the last day of the feast," amidst assembled thousands, Jesus appears and offers with earnestness, and on the easiest conditions, the one great blessing which humanity requires, to make it holy, great, and happy, viz., the spiritual quickening influences of God.

I. He offers them the HIGHEST BLESSING. What is it? Water. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." Water is the most precious element in nature: a life-giving, thirst-satisfying, nature-cleansing, and supporting element. What is the water Christ here offers?

First: It was a *Divinely refreshing influence*. "This spake He of the Spirit," i.e. the Spirit of God, that quickeneth all things: the spirit of love, and truth, and peace, and righteousness. This is that which alone can satisfy the burning thirst of human souls. A soul without this spirit is like an Oriental traveller on the burning sands with no water.

Secondly: It was a *Divinely refreshing influence* that *would roll through the centre of human nature*. "Out of His belly,—His body, Himself—shall flow rivers of living water." The spiritual influences which Christ gives will not only allay the thirst, but stream forth in all directions to refresh and quicken the spirits of others. A good man is a fountain of life.

Thirdly: It was a *Divinely refreshing influence* that *only came in its plenitude after the ascension of Christ*. "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." The Holy Spirit was not yet in all its power and fulness; it came not until the day of Pentecost, when the influence came down like showers upon the new-mown grass. Behold this Philanthropist! How He transcends even the most illustrious benefactors of the race. Who ever bestowed such benedictions as He? He brings the refreshing influences of God into the human soul, and thus blesses that soul in

order to make it a fountain of blessing to others. He fills the human with the Divine.

II. He offers them the highest blessing WITH INTENSE EARNESTNESS. "Jesus stood and cried," *ἔκραξε*. A term used to denote a proclamation with peculiar boldness and emphasis. Christ's invitation was the opposite to all that is cold and formal. His own soul—which was on fire—went out with the cry. Would that we had heard His voice: how loud, how tuneful, how thrilling! Loud as thunder, sweet as music, piercing as agony. Christ was no half-hearted philanthropist. He did not form a scheme to help the world, and work at it methodically, or with spasmodic earnestness. From beginning to end He was earnest: "I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is called to-day, for the night cometh in the which no man can work." He travelled in soul to regenerate the world. Does incessant labour prove earnestness? Does enormous sacrifice prove earnestness? Does grappling with the fiercest foes prove earnestness? Does soul-absorbing, self-sacrificing, unremitting struggle prove earnestness? Then Christ was an earnest Philanthropist: "He poured out His very soul unto death." "Jesus stood and cried." And He stands now before humanity and cries through nature, through Providence, through reason, through conscience, and through the blessed Gospel, and says to all: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink." To Me, not to the caterers for public amusements, not to priests, philosophers, or poets, but to Me.

III. He offers them the highest blessing ON THE EASIEST CONDITION: "He that believeth on Me." He does not require great struggling, great labour, great sacrifice, as the condition of its bestowment, but simple faith in Him. Observe,

First: *Faith in a proposition that is obviously true is one of the easiest acts of the mind.* It is as easy for me to believe a truth as it is to open my eyes and behold the light. In addition to this, we have all a natural craving to believe: man is a credulous creature, so much so that his crime and curse is, that he believes too much rather than too little.

Secondly: *Faith in a person that is obviously good, is easier still.* Faith in men is a universal instinct. We are made to trust in each other. We do so through all the stages of life, from the dawn of childhood to the night of age. True, as our experience advances, our faith in some men is severely tried and often shipwrecked; but to others we hold on until the last gasp. Now did ever a being appear in history so easy to confide in as Christ—a Being so obviously perfect in love, truthfulness, tenderness, wisdom? All that is wanted, then, is to believe on Him, in order to get this highest good: this quickening, refreshing, satisfying influence of God. “He that believeth on *Me*.” Who cannot believe on Him? None but those who do not study Him as He appears on the pages of His biographers.

CONCLUSION.—Blessed be heaven for such a Philanthropist as this! Why need the world be unhappy? Why need men be damned, either here or yonder, with such a Philanthropist as this?

“Ho, ye who pant for living streams,
And pine away and die,
Here you may quench your raging thirst
With springs that never dry.”

Biblical Criticism.

Subject: Election.

(Continued from Page 237.)

FIRST of all, it is a fact worthy of remark, and not sufficiently noted, that the Apostle, in the dissertation from which we have taken our principal quotations, has not properly in view individuals, but masses—the two great sections of humanity which he so often contrasts—the Jews and the Gentiles. It is in reference to the general relation between

them and the providential government of our race that he brings forth his arguments. Regarded closely, the whole of this ninth chapter, intimately connected as it is with the two following, is not speaking of predestination in the ordinary scholastic or Calvinistic sense of the word. This great section of the Epistle to the Romans is designed to explain theologically a material and historical fact, viz., the repugnance of the great majority of the Jews to the Gospel—a repugnance which seemed about to make them lose all the advantages promised of old, and thus, as it were, to belie God, who had held out to them such a prospect. We have here, then, Paul's explanation of this fact, which struck his mind and which had already been pointed out by the Saviour. "God," he says, "hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear." Only an insignificant minority does not share in this blindness, as if reserved to be the root and stock of a new growth. But this blindness, this partial hardening of Israel, forms a part of the secret purposes of God, which are only revealed by the event itself. It is designed to be the occasion and the cause of the conversion of the Gentiles. When these shall have been brought within the fold of the Church, the turn of Israel will also come. For the present, and in their actual relation to the Gospel, the Jews are without, they are enemies for your sake, O Gentiles, as though to open the door to you. But absolutely and according to the unchangeable decrees of God, they are still His beloved; the benefits to the enjoyment of which they were formerly called, shall never be lost to them; they also, in the end, shall obtain mercy. Glorious philosophy of history, worthy indeed to call forth the enraptured adoration of the Apostle! The individual is lost sight of in the great march of historic events; and the judgment pronounced upon these will be all the more true for being thus raised above the sphere of details and accidental phenomena.

But it is just this very circumstance which proves to us the insufficiency of the theory. In historical cases of this nature, and especially in those of which Paul is here broadly tracing

the mysterious vicissitudes, the individual is sacrificed to the interests of the masses. Yet the God of the Gospel is assuredly the God of individuals also. Why must He cause to perish, or allow to perish, so many of the Jews for the benefit of a number (greater no doubt) of Gentiles? Was there no other way for these to be saved? Or if, indeed, these perverse Jews refused the Gospel, must Paul of necessity lay that opposition to the charge of God? In short, does not the broad, elevated, admirable theory of the eleventh chapter resolve itself thus, under another aspect, into the sorrowful, narrow, disheartening theory of the ninth? Does there not lie beneath this teaching also the refusal to reply to a most natural and legitimate question? Does not it also imply those hard words, "Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say unto Him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" This very question suggests a few closing reflections, not critical, but explanatory, upon this point; we shall make these remarks here because Paul is the only one who attempts to establish it by argument. His logic fails him, as it failed all the philosophers, ancient and modern, of every school, who have sought to solve the problem of the connection between omniscience, or Divine prescience, and the freedom of man. In the concrete question which he is treating, and from which he starts, he insists upon the fact that Jacob was chosen without any merit of his own, in order to make the Jews feel that human merit is not the ground of salvation; that natural sonship does not constitute men heirs of the promises given to the fathers; that the Gentiles might as freely share in them, by the grace of God, who was about to show the world that His kingdom was not enfeoffed to any one people. As he proceeds to carry out this perfectly just and legitimate idea to its farthest issues, even to the borders of a paradox, from which Paul is never wont to recoil, he proclaims with equal boldness the counterpart of this idea, viz., that rejection also is the effect of the sovereign will of God, and not the consequence of demerit. Esau is rejected, as Jacob is chosen, because God wills it. There is no other reason; and this second fact is

established less on the ground of God's prescience than of His absolute sovereignty. But if our reason can and is bound to accept the first fact of election without merit, it is shocked, repelled, by the second rejection without demerit. The common sense of the Apostle at once suggests to him this natural objection, "Why then does He yet find fault?" And for all reply, he can only lower man to the level of inert matter in order to save his logic.

The problem is plainly beyond the scope of human reason; and, on this very ground, revelation itself has not been able to offer a solution of it; since revelation, while it is able to supply man with new ideas, is not able to change the laws of his nature and to give him faculties which creation has withheld. Thus, it can give him just conceptions of the moral relations between the world and God, but it cannot make him comprehend the very essence of God in the nature and means of His operations upon the universe, since, to do this, it would need to raise men to the level of God Himself. It does not even tell him on these matters (and herein is its wisdom) as much as philosophy claims to teach. Subject as we are in all our life and thought and action to the restrictions of time and space, it is impossible for us to comprehend how God exists, thinks, acts, independently of space or time, and no revelation can enlighten us on the matter. Consequently the Apostle, like any other man entering on such a subject, strikes against a rock which he would have done wisely not to approach. As we examine more closely into the theology of Paul, we find him elsewhere steadily keeping at a distance from this dangerous coast, and content with meeting at once the requirements of religious faith and practical morality. The former demands the absolute sovereignty of God, alike in wisdom and power; the latter asserts with no less emphasis the liberty of man. Consequently, where God is concerned, dogmatic theology insists upon the complete independence of His will and action, and uses expressions which approach the doctrine of predestination; where man is concerned, moral teaching insists upon his free will, and invites him by hopes and threats to

labour for his own salvation. The theoretical and the practical view are both alike true; but, because of the weakness of our understanding, which is not able to harmonize them in one metaphysical formula, they are true to us only on condition of being kept distinct from each other.

One word more. Judaism, in the time of the Apostles, proclaimed simply and broadly the predestination of Israel and the repudiation of the Gentiles. National prejudice dominated religious thought; and the practical morality of the Pharisees was itself so lax that it dared not find a flaw in the theories of the schools. Hence also it is that the expressions which represent these theories are so familiar to the authors of the New Testament. They employ them generally without feeling the difficulties they suggest; and they use them with reference to an actual division of the human race analogous to that which formed the basis of the theology of the synagogue. Judæo-Christianity ignored even the presence of the problems concealed, as if designedly, by this point of view, apparently so simple and legitimate. We shall see John raising a corner of the veil, and then at once letting it fall again. Paul alone frankly faces the question; and if he cannot answer it successfully, so far from reproaching him with his failure, we venture to say that by so doing he shows himself to be the only true theologian among his contemporaries. True knowledge alone is able to recognize clearly the limits imposed upon it.

EDWARD REUSS.

Germs of Thought.

Subject: Ministerial Stewardship.

"It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."—1 Cor. iv. 2.

WHEREVER St. Paul went, he maintained his apostolic authority. It is remarkable that his apostleship should ever have been questioned, for his credentials were stamped with the signature of God, and could bear the strictest scrutiny and analysis. Though he was conscious of a Divine call, he was at the same time deeply sensible of his great responsibility. "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

I. MINISTERS THE STEWARDS OF GOD. The primary application of the words of the text is to "ministers of Christ;" and in this sense I shall use them. The word "steward" is employed here to denote one who is acting for another one from whom he has received authority, and to whom he is responsible.

First: The true minister of the Gospel, as a steward of God, is—*Divinely commissioned*. The Christian ministry is of Divine appointment. It were impious to classify it with institutions that are worldly and human. Its high honours are not hereditary. A call to the ministry is a call from God, or it has in it no worth or authority. We do not say the recognition and recommendation of the Church in the ordination and appointment of pastors are unimportant; but we do emphatically say that they cannot confer that authoritative commission which a true minister of the Gospel must have. Let a man possess the consciousness that he is called of God to preach and teach in holy things, then he will go forth with authority and power. Without that consciousness he will be morally weak, indeed, totally disqualified: his lips will falter and his heart will fail.

Secondly: God does not call any to the stewardship of

the Christian ministry who are disqualified. There must be (1) *mental fitness*. A minister must be "apt to teach," that is necessary; and let it ever be remembered that no learning can be too profound for the elucidation and enforcement of Divine truth—truth that carries an influence that shapes the eternal destiny of all who come within its circle, as nothing else does, as nothing else can! There must be (2) *moral fitness*. The first and indispensable condition of ministerial fitness, is conversion of heart; the next, holiness of life. It is lamentable to think that many have been engaged for years in seeking the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of saints, before they have realized that they themselves were never changed and converted! How lifeless must have been their words! How barren their ministry!

Thirdly: *Those whom God calls and appoints to this high stewardship He sustains*. That pastor has abundant cause for congratulation who has an affectionate, a sympathetic people to whom to minister. Let him prize their love, etc. But with all the help and happiness that these outward encouragements afford—encouragements which it is the duty of Churches to give, all ministerial stewards feel that they need to be sustained with that inward, mighty strength which cometh directly from God.

First: As ministers, we are entrusted with the Gospel. It is our duty, (1) *To expound it*. We cannot but admit that expository preaching has not received sufficient attention. Topical preaching has been the common, almost universal and exclusive, way of presenting the Gospel; and perhaps because we have considered it more calculated to suit the popular taste. We are happily breaking away from that custom. To exegetically expound the Word of God—to spend our lives in unfolding that Divine system of redemptive truth which is designated the Gospel—that is our duty, and we cannot overlook it by pandering to popular taste, except at the expense of a betrayal of our trust. (2) *To apply it*. If the Gospel be truthfully and faithfully expounded, then it will also be applied; but many ministers have fallen into the habit of pre-

senting the truths of Scripture without pressing them upon the attention and practice of their hearers. While it is not sufficient to treat the Gospel superficially in our sermons, it is not sufficient to elucidate its principles : they must be enforced. (1) The Gospel makes known the pardon which has been provided for sinners; and it is incumbent on the stewards of God to beseech them to be reconciled to God. The commission is a wide one; it knows no other limitation than the circumference of the globe. "Go ye into all the world." (2) *The Gospel is a trumpet-call to Christian perfection.* The duties God requires of us are here made known. Precepts to guide, laws to govern, promises to encourage us in seeking Christian perfection,—these must be enunciated and urged. To be eloquent in handling the themes of the Gospel, to be orthodox beyond the possible charge of heresy, is not enough. To transform men, we must be persuasive—intensely practical. As orthodoxy is no substitute for godliness, in order to superinduce holiness of life we must use all the enforcement of which we are capable, in bringing Divine truths to bear upon the hearts and lives of those to whom we minister; for those truths, to be saving, must be *lived* as well as believed. Thirdly: *To defend it.* "I am set," says Paul, "for the defence of the Gospel." In the present day the Bible is insidiously as well as openly attacked. The enemies of our holy religion are to be found among the philosophers, the naturalists, the scientists, the ritualists, as well as in the avowed atheists of the day. And we cannot close our eyes to the fact, that while the foundations of our Christianity are deep, and strong, and safe, in harmony with all true science and philosophy, and unopposed to symbolism and ritual that are helpful to true worship—these men, by their false interpretations and their distortions of religion, are capable of working much mischief, of developing doubt, of propagating error. They must be met in fair fight by those whose duty it is to defend the Gospel of Christ. Here, as everywhere, cowardly silence is shame and sin.

Secondly: *As stewards of God, we are entrusted with souls.*

With souls! Oh, I tremble at the thought! How great the trust! How awful the responsibility! Yet every Christian minister is the steward of souls in two senses. (1) That he faithfully warn the unconverted of their danger, and set before them the hope of the Gospel (Ezek. xxxiii. 7-9; Acts iv. 12; xxvii. 16-18. (2) That he faithfully warn the converted against sin and apostasy of heart, and train them to manhood in Christ Jesus (Ezek xxxiii. 12-18; Acts xx. 31; Eph. iv. 11-13). I cannot elaborate. I simply remind my brothers of the Apostle's words: "We watch for souls as those who must give an account."

II. MINISTERS SOLEMNLY RESPONSIBLE. "It is required in stewards, that a man be found *faithful*." Faithful to Christ, by preaching Him and not ourselves; faithful to His Gospel, by teaching its truths in no cold, formal, hesitating, utterances, but by ringing them out with distinctness and emphasis; faithful to souls, in not seeking theirs, but them; faithful because we shall have to give an account of our stewardship.

1. *All ministers can be faithful.* We cannot all be eloquent. We cannot all attract large crowds to attend our ministry. We cannot all be popular—standing and serving in the high places of the earth. What if we cannot? How poor and passing are such honours! Eloquence, popularity, high position—what are these worth, wanting fidelity? They are but a breath that quickly evaporates; a bubble that collapses suddenly; a brittle thread that may snap at any moment; *faithfulness*, blessed be God, that lasts, and has reserved for it eternal honours. Fidelity will turn the balance in the day of reckoning—this will reverse the positions of men; and many who were first in position and popularity, will be last because they were unfaithful; while many who were last in these respects, will be first, because, in their contracted sphere and with their slender abilities, they were faithful. "If I cannot be as eloquent as Cicero or Demosthenes, if I cannot be as powerful in my influence as Luther or Wesley, *I can be faithful*; and because I can, God helping me, I will!"

2. *All ministers must be faithful.* It is "required." It is imperative. But to be faithful is more difficult than is generally considered and conceded. It wants courage, nay, it wants the highest kind of heroism. Depend upon it, it is no light matter; it requires no common boldness to stand single-handed before the pride of birth, and the pride of rank, and the pride of office, and the pride of intellect, and the pride of money, to rebuke their transgressions, to strip off their false confidence, and tear away their refuge of lies.

"It is required in stewards that a man may be found faithful."

Abridged from MS. by Editor.

E. D. SOLOMON.

The Preacher's Finger-Post.

Subject: THE USE AND THE ABUSE OF THE GOSPEL.

"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling: desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm."—1 TIM. i. 5-7.

The Gospel is a commandment—a law. As a law it is *authoritative, published, binding.* The text suggests the use and the abuse of this Gospel.

I. The USE of it. What is the use of it? First: The production of *love* in the soul. "The end of the commandment is charity." Men in

their unrenewed state are invariably selfish and often malign. These elements of character are sinful and ruinous; they are the curse of humanity. The end of the Gospel is to burn these up with the "unquenchable fire" of truth, and fill the soul with disinterested love. The Gospel has done nothing effectually for the man unless it has filled him with love. Secondly: The production of *purity* in the soul. "A pure heart." The heart stands for the emotional system, the centre of feeling, the fountain of action. This heart, in fallen humanity, is deeply stained with moral corruption, deceitful above all things, and

desperately wicked. The end of the Gospel is to make it pure, to cleanse it by the washing of water and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Thirdly: The production of a *sound moral sense* in the soul. "A good conscience." Conscience has been called sometimes an exponent of moral law, sometimes a judge, sometimes a sentiment. Whatever it is, I regard it not as a faculty of our nature, but as the substratum of human nature, that in which all the faculties adhere. This in unrenewed man is in a corrupt state. It is blinded, hardened, obliquitous, etc. The end of the Gospel is to make this conscience "good." To give it true light, sensibility, freedom, peace. Fourthly: The production of a *genuine confidence* in the soul. "Faith unfeigned." Sound faith in Christ, an abiding, practical faith—not merely in the doctrines of Christ or the facts of His history, but in Himself as the Personal Son of God and the Saviour of the world.

Such is the end of the Gospel—not to create sects, organize churches, or formulate theological systems, but to make men loving, pure, morally sound, and Divinely trustful. Notice—

II. The ABUSE of it. "Some," says the Apostle, "having swerved have turned aside," i.e., have missed the

mark; they have not used the Gospel rightly. The Apostle mentions some out of the many great abuses of the Gospel. Their talk was "jangling." Miserable discussions about forms, ceremonies, traditions, etc., etc. How much in all ages has there been of this in connection with the Gospel. What miserable jargon, what *jejeune* gabbling. Their talk was (1) Vain—vain, in the sense of emptiness and unsatisfactoriness. It had no substance of truth in it, and therefore nothing in it to satisfy either the intellect or the heart. (2) Ambitious. "Desiring to be teachers of the law." The reference throughout is to the Judaizers, whose error was not in maintaining the obligations of law, but by ignorantly abusing it by fabulous and immoral interpretations. "Desiring to be teachers." In how many thousands in Christendom does the Gospel awaken little more than the ambition to be teachers? All it does for them is to strike into their hearts a desire to talk about it, mainly for the purpose of self-parade. Perhaps there is no greater abuse of the Gospel than a certain kind of pulpiteering. (3) Ignorant. "Understanding neither what they say nor whereof they affirm." As a rule, the men who are most anxious to preach are the most ignorant. The law is

everywhere, the less thinking, the more speaking.

CONCLUSION : God deliver us from the awful sin of abusing the Gospel ! Better abuse the light of heaven, or the waters that minister life and beauty to the world. Better abuse anything than the Gospel. Great Spirit, may the Gospel perform its end in us ! Make us generous, holy, morally sound, confiding in Thee with an unbounded trust.

Subject : THE POWER OF DEPRAVITY.

"The power of darkness."—COL. i. 13.

"Darkness" stands for sin. It implies ignorance and sorrow. Sin is powerful, "the power of darkness." Look at human depravity as a power.

I. It is a MIGHTY "power." Depravity is everywhere ; it is the moral monarch of the world. It excites, governs, uses the thoughts, passions, and energies of the great bulk of the human race. It is the mightiest thing in the world. It fills the horizon of mankind, darkens its moral sun, and throws its deadly shadows over all things human.

II. It is an UNNATURAL "power." It is not like the power of attraction, or other forces of the world,—chemical, mechanical, or vital,—which are Divine ordinances. The

power of depravity is an unnatural power ; it is against the nature of God, the nature of man, the nature of the universe. It is a disease that has broken out in the system. Sin is unnatural.

III. It is a DESTRUCTIVE "power." History is filled with the records of the havoc that it has wrought. The world is covered with mentoos of its devastating force. (1) It destroys *order*. The order of the individual soul, communities, churches, nations, the world. (2) It destroys *usefulness*. Men were made to serve as angels their fellow-men, but depravity makes them act as devils. (3) It destroys *peace*. It keeps souls in perpetual agitation, fills them with distracting passions and terrible forebodings. "The wicked are like the troubled sea." (4) It destroys *dignity*. It has taken the crown from the head of humanity, and turned the gold into dross. Where is moral grandeur now? Now and then, in the course of an age, a man or two arise in every land who reveal something of the moral grandeur that originally belonged to human nature ; but the innumerable multitude are dreadfully degraded.

IV. It is a TUMULTUOUS "power." The volcano that rives the mountains, the tornado that sweeps devastation

over sea and land, are tumultuous forces; but not more tumultuous than that of depravity. It is essentially tumultuous, simply because it consists in an eternal battle against conscience, truth, moral law, Divine reality. It exists by fighting, and its fightings are passionate, noisy, bloody.

V. It is a RESISTIBLE "power." It is not omnipotent, it is not like the force that rolls the planets and heaves the oceans, whose progress you cannot arrest. It can be resisted. Man *can* do it. He can resist the devil and he will flee from him. Man *has* done it. Paul did it. He crucified the flesh with its corruptions and lusts. The Corinthians did it. Christ did it. He battled with it forty days in the wilderness and triumphantly resisted it. Every man *should* do it. He only is worthy of the name of man just as he succeeds. This is the battle of life. Do not float with the stream. "Breast the wave," brother.

VI. It is a DESTROYABLE "power." Thank God, while it is a *destructive* power it is also a *destroyable* power. Christ came to destroy the works of the devil. It will one day be utterly destroyed. Like the colossal image in the dream of the monarch, the Gospel stone shall shiver it to pieces, and the strong

winds of Divine influences shall bear away every particle, so that no place shall be found for them.

Subject: CONSCIOUS CONTACT
WITH CHRIST.

"For she said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole. But Jesus turned Him about, and when He saw her, He said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour."
—MATT. ix. 21, 22.

In a previous number of this volume we had some remarks on this narrative.* We take these words simply because they suggest two thoughts concerning conscious contact with Christ.

I. EVANGELICAL FAITH BRINGS MAN into conscious contact with Christ. "Thy faith hath made thee whole." Why? Because it brought her into contact with Christ. She *touch*ed His garment. How does faith bring the soul into conscious contact with Christ?

First: He Himself is its grand object. Genuine gospel faith is not mere faith in the truths that Christ preached, or in the works that He wrought, the sufferings He endured, or in the death that He died; but in Himself. It is unbounded

* See Page 182.

confidence in Him as the supremely good, the supremely loving, the God-sent Saviour. Faith in Him is *the* faith.

Secondly: Christ, as the grand object of faith when realized by the soul, will always be in it as a predominant and permanent force. Such is the relation of Christ to the rational faculties, the moral sentiments, and deep spiritual needs of man, that when once He is apprehended and enters the soul by faith, there He will remain; He will dwell in it and reign in it. In all things in it He will have the pre-eminence. Christ will not only always be present with it, but *in* it.

II. CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH CHRIST RESTORES TO PERFECT HEALTHFULNESS. She touched His garment and was made whole. Elsewhere it is said the whole multitude sought to touch Him, and there went virtue out of Him and healed them all. And again, "He had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon Him for to touch Him." And again, the men of Gennesaret sent unto Him "all that were diseased, and besought Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole." The men of His days, many of them, had the belief that they had only to *touch* Him in order to be made whole. Much might be written about

the power of touch, even materially considered; but our object is with the spiritual rather than with the sensuous touch—the touch of spiritual beings, the touch of souls. We know, for example—

First: That the contact of *ignorance* with *intelligence* is the way to destroy it. Hence we send ignorance to school.

Secondly: That the contact of *sadness* with *joy* is the way to destroy it. Take gloom and sorrow into the presence of calm, holy, elevated joy, and in all probability it will melt away.

Thirdly: That the contact of *despondency* with *hopefulness* is the way to destroy it.

Take those who are disheartened and depressed by a thousand disappointments into the presence of buoyant, sunny hopefulness, and the pressure will give way and the downcast spirit will rise with new force. These mental touches, these spiritual contacts, are working wonders every day in human society. Hence the ignorant are enlightened, the sorrowful gladdened, the desponding become buoyant in hope.

But the *contact of spiritual disease with Christ is the way to moral soundness*. The only way to restore health is to impart new life. Christ is the fountain of moral life. "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

He that hath the Son hath life." The man that truly believes hath the Son. He not only touches Him but is in close constant spiritual contact with Him; and he hath life—the life of truthful investigation into the works and ways of God, the life of holy love, lofty friendships, undying hopes.

CONCLUSION: Behold the power of true faith! It brings the soul into conscious con-

tact with Him who, Paul says, is exalted far above all heavens. The highest blessings of the universe are near us. It is not *local distance* that divides us from God, His blessed Paradise, and His holy Christ; but simply *moral difference*. Moral disparity is the great gulf that divides the damned in the nether regions from the blessed in the highest heavens.

THE LITURGY OF HEAVEN.—There is a world-wide liturgy going on. The worshippers are diverse in clime, and colour, and character, and language. Their modes of conducting the worship are diverse; there are written prayers and extempore prayers. There are old psalms copied from the Hebrew Bible, and new hymns breathed from the Christian heart. There are Episcopalian transepts in the temple, and Presbyterian pews, and Congregationalist, and Methodist, and Baptist, and Moravian, and I know not how many other benches. To the narrow eye of an earthly spectator, the scene is confused. To the narrow ear of an earthly auditor, the sounds are discordant. But to the eye and ear of our great Interpreter in heaven, our great heart-searching Priest, our great Liturgiser before the throne, the scene is one; not by mingling them all together, so as to lose the distinctiveness of each; but in all their diversities, one—a place for each, and a use for each. Every one is feeling, "I am a sinner," and saying it as best he can. Every one is feeling Christ is a Saviour; and when the mutterings of all reach heaven, their united sound is, "Worthy is the Lamb!"

Seeds of Sermons from the Minor Prophets.

If the Bible as a whole is inspired, it is of vast importance that all its Divine ideas should be brought to bear upon the living world of men. Though the pulpit is the organ Divinely intended for this work, it has been doing it hitherto in a miserably partial and restricted method. It selects isolated passages, and leaves whole chapters and books for the most part untouched. Its conduct to the Minor Prophets may be taken as a case in point. How seldom are they resorted to for texts! and yet they abound with splendid passages throbbing with Divine ideas. It is our purpose to go through this section of the Holy Word; selecting, however, only such verses in each chapter and book as seem the most suggestive of truths of the most vital interest and universal application.

Having passed rapidly through Hosea and Joel, two of the Minor Prophets, we come now to Amos. He, we are informed, was a native of Tekoa, a small region in the tribe of Judah, about twelve miles south-east of Jerusalem. Nothing is known of his parents. He evidently belonged to the humbler class of life, and pursued the occupation of the humble shepherd. From his flock he was divinely called to the high office of prophet; and though himself of the tribe of Judah, his mission was to Israel. He was sent to Bethel, into the kingdom of the ten tribes. He commenced his ministry in the reign of Uzziah, between 810 and 788 a.c., and therefore laboured about the same time as Hosea. In his time idolatry, with its concomitant evils and immoralities of every description, reigned with uncontrolled sway amongst the Israelites, and against these evils he hurls his denunciations. The book has been divided into three parts: "First, sentences pronounced against the Syrians, the Philistines, the Phœnicians, the Edomites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Jews, and the Israelites, chapters i. and ii. Secondly, special discourses delivered against Israel, chapters iii. to vi. Third, visions, partly of a consolatory and partly of a comminatory nature, in which reference is had both to the time that wore to pass over the ten tribes previous to the coming of the Messiah, and to what was to take place under His reign, chapters vii. to ix. His style is marked by perspicuity, elegance, energy, and fulness. His images are mostly original, and taken from the natural scenery with which he was familiar.

No. C.

Subject: RIPENESS FOR JUDGMENT.

"Thus hath the Lord God showed unto me: and behold a basket of summer fruit. And He said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the Lord unto me, The end is come upon my people of Israel; I will not again pass by them any more. And the songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord God: there shall be many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast them forth with silence."—Amos viii. 1-3.

The text suggests three general truths.

I. WICKED NATIONS GROW RIPE

FOR JUDGMENT.—The "basket of summer fruit," now given in vision to Amos, was intended to symbolize that his country was ripe for ruin. This symbol suggests—

First: That *Israel's present moral corruption was no hasty production*. The ripe fruit in that basket did not spring forth at once, it took many months to produce. It came about by a slow and gradual process. Men do not become great sinners at once. The character of a people does not reach its last degree of vileness in a few years, it takes time. The first seed of evil is to be germinated, then it grows, ripens, and multiplies until there is a crop

ready for the sickle. This symbol suggests—

Secondly: That *Israel's season for improvement was past and gone.* The ripened fruit in that basket had reached a stage in which improvement was impossible. The bloom was passing away, and rottenness was setting in. Nations become incorrigible. The time comes when it may be said, The harvest is past, all cultivation is impossible. What boots your sowing seed under the burning sun of July or August? The fructifying forces of nature will not co-operate with you. This symbol suggests—

Thirdly: That *Israel's utter ruin was inevitable.* Nothing awaited that "basket of summer fruit" but rottenness. Its decomposition was working, and would soon reduce it to putrescent filth. So it was with Israel.

The text suggests—

II. TRUE PROPHETS ARE MADE SENSIBLE OF THIS RIPENESS. God gives Amos a vision for the purpose. "Thus hath the Lord God showed unto me, and behold a basket of summer fruit. And He said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the Lord unto me, The end is come upon my people of Israel." God always gives His true ministers a clear vision of the subjects of their discourse. This clearness of vision is in truth their call and qualification for their Divine mission. Men, alas! often assume the work of the ministry whose mental vision is so dim that they are unable to see anything with vivid clearness, hence they always move in a haze, and

their language is circumlocutory and ambiguous. Amongst the vulgar, those who should be condemned for their obtuseness get credit for their profundity. To every true teacher God says at the outset, "What seest thou?" Hast thou a clear vision of this basket of summer fruit? Hast thou a clear idea of this subject on which thou art about to discourse? Thus He dealt with Moses, Elijah, Daniel, Paul, John.

The text suggests—

III. ALMIGHTY GOD MAKES HIS PROPHETS SENSIBLE OF THE RIPENESS OF A PEOPLE'S CORRUPTION IN ORDER THAT THEY MAY SOUND THE ALARM. Why was Amos thus divinely impressed with the wretched moral condition of the people of Israel? Simply that he may be more earnest and emphatical in sounding the alarm: "The end is come upon my people of Israel; I will not again pass by them any more. And the songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord God: there shall be many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast them forth with silence." What was the calamity he was to proclaim?

First: *Universal mourning.* "The songs of the temple shall be howlings." Where the shouts of mirth and the songs of joy were heard, there should be nothing but the howlings of distress. The inevitable tendency of sin is to turn songs of gladness into howlings of distress.

Secondly: *Universal death.* "And there shall be many dead bodies in every place, and they shall cast them forth with silence." The reference is to

sword, pestilence, and famine multiplying so rapidly the dead as to render impossible the ordinary decencies and ceremonies at funerals. "Cast them forth with silence."

CONCLUSION. How stands our country? Is not its moral depravity ripening in every direction? Is it not filling up its measure of iniquities, treasuring up wrath against the last day? Does it not become all true teachers to sound the alarm, the time seems past for crying peace and safety: destruction is at hand, the fields are white for harvest.

NO. CL

Subject: AVARICE.

"Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit? That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat? The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works. Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? And it shall rise up wholly as a flood; and it shall be cast out and drowned, as by the flood of Egypt. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day: and I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and bald-

ness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day."—Amos viii. 4-10.

The prophet here resumes his denunciatory discourse to the avaricious oppressors of the people. The verses may be taken as God's homily to greedy men. "Hear this." Hush! pay attention to what I am going to say. Listen, "ye that swallow up the needy." The words suggest three remarks concerning avarice.

I. It is **EXECRABLE** IN ITS SPIRIT.

First: It is *sacrilegious*. "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn, and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?" Bad as Israel was, it still kept up the mere observances of religion, yet these observances they regarded as commercial inconveniences. In their hearts they wished them away, when they seemed to obstruct their greedy plans. With sacrilegious spirit: they treated religious institutions as worthless in comparison with sordid gain. Avarice in heart has no reverence for religion.

Secondly: It is *dishonest*. "Making the ephah small and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit." It is always over-reaching, always cheating; it generally victimizes the poor; it makes its fortunes out of the brain and muscles, the sweat and life of the needy.

Thirdly: It is *cruel*. "Ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail . . . That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes." Avarice

deadens all social affections, steels the heart, and makes its subject utterly indifferent to all interests but its own; it will swallow up, or, as some render it, gape after, the needy just as the wild beast pants after its prey. "Greedy men are a generation whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from amongst men."

II. It is ABHORRENT TO JEHOVAH. "The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works." Some render the "excellency of Jacob" the "pride of Jacob," and suppose the expression to mean, that Israel professed to regard Him as its glory; and therefore it is by Himself, for He can swear by no one greater. God observes all the cruelties which avarice inflicts upon the poor. Nothing is more abhorrent to His benevolent nature than covetousness. One of the leading principles in His moral code is, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, etc., etc. Against no sin did His blessed Son preach more earnestly. "Take heed, beware of covetousness," said He. He closes the gates of heaven against covetousness. "The covetous shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven."

First: It is *repugnant to His nature*. His love is disinterested, unbounded love, working ever for the good of the universe. Greed is a hideous antagonist to this.

Secondly: It is *hostile to universal happiness*. He created the universe in order to diffuse happiness; but greed is against

it. (1) It is against the happiness of its *possessor*. The soul under the influence of covetousness can neither grow in power nor be gratified in desire. Avarice is an element of hell. It is in truth one of the fiery furies of soul. (2) It is against the happiness of *society*. It prompts men to appropriate more of the common good than belongs to them, and thus diminish the required supplies of the multitude. It is the creator of monopoly, and monopoly is the devil of social life.

III. It is a CURSE TO SOCIETY. See what punishment comes on the land through this! "Shall not the land tremble for this," etc., etc. Observe—

First: How God makes nature an avenging angel. He makes "the land tremble." He "toucheth the hills and they smoke," pours out waters as a flood. He can make the world of waters deluge the earth as the overflowing Nile at times inundates the land of Egypt. He can roll back the sun. "I will cause the sun to go down at noon."* Observe—

Secondly: How God makes a multitude to suffer on account of the iniquities of the few. "And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentations: and I will bring up sackcloth, etc."

CONCLUSION. — Avoid covetousness. It is the chief of the principalities and powers of darkness. It may be considered the great fountain whence all the streams of crime and mi-

* See a Breviary on this text in the present number, Page 303.

sery flow forth. It is eternally opposed to the virtue and happiness of the universe. The fable of Midas in Grecian mythology is strikingly illustrative of this tremendous evil. Bacchus once offered Midas his choice of gifts. He asked that whatever he might touch should be changed into gold. Bacchus consented, though sorry that he had not made a better choice. Midas went his way rejoicing in his newly-acquired power, which he hastened to put to the test. He could scarcely believe his eyes when he found a twig of an oak, which he had plucked, become gold in his hand. He took up a stone, and it changed to gold. He touched a sod: it did the same. He took an apple from a tree: you would have thought he had robbed the garden of the Hesperides. His joy knew no bounds; and when he got home he ordered the servants to set a splendid repast on the table. Then he found to his dismay that whether he touched bread, it hardened in his hand, or put a morsel to his lips, it defied his teeth. He took a glass of wine, but it flowed down his throat like melted gold. In consternation, fearing starvation, he held up his arms shining with gold to Bacchus, and besought him to take back his gift. Bacchus said, "Go to the river Pactolus: trace the stream to its fountain head: there plunge your head and body in, and wash away your fault and its punishment." Hence Midas learned to hate wealth and splendour.

No. CII.

Subject: SOUL FAMINE.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it. In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst. They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy god, O Dan, liveth; and, The manner of Bear-sheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again."—*Amos viii. 11-14.*

The Israelites now despised the message of the prophets, and by a just retribution, in addition to all their other calamities, they should experience a total withdrawal of all prophetic communications. In whatever direction they might proceed, and whatever efforts they might make to obtain information relative to the issue of their trouble, they should meet with nothing but disappointment."

The subject of these words is soul famine, and they suggest four general remarks—

I. That THE PROFOUNDEST WANT OF HUMAN NATURE IS A COMMUNICATION FROM THE ETERNAL MIND. This is implied in the Divine menace of sending a worse famine than that of want of bread and water. It was *special* communications from Himself, not the ordinary communications of nature, that Jehovah here refers to; and man has no greater necessity than this, it is the one urgent and imperial need. Two great questions are everlastingly rising

from the depths of the human soul.

First: How does the Eternal feel in relation to me as a sinner? Nature tells me how He feels in relation to me as a creature; but nature was written before I fell.

Secondly: How am I to get my moral nature restored? I have a sense of guilt that is sometimes intolerable; the elements of my nature are in eternal conflict; I have sadly terrible forebodings of the future. Now the special word of God can alone answer these questions. These are the problems of men the world over. God's word is to the human soul what food is to the body, that which alone can strengthen, sustain, and satisfy. But as the soul is of infinitely greater importance than the body, the Divine Word is more needed than material food.

II. THAT THE GREATEST DISEASE OF HUMAN NATURE IS A LACK OF APPETITE FOR THIS COMMUNICATION. Which is the greater want of the body, the want of food, or the want of appetite for food? The latter, I trow, for the latter implies disease. It is so with the soul. The vast majority of souls have lost the appetite for the Divine word. They are perishing, shrivelling up, for the lack of it. The desire is gone. They die, not for the want of the food, but for the want of appetite. As a rule, the starvation of souls is not for the lack of food, but for the lack of appetite. The worst of this disease is—(1) men are not conscious of it; (2) it works the worst ruin.

III. That the GREATEST MISERY OF HUMAN NATURE IS A

QUICKENED APPETITE AND NO SUPPLIES. "They shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it."

First: The appetite will be quickened sooner or later. Sometimes—would it were ever so!—it is quickened here, where supplies abound. Hear Job's cry, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him." And hear Saul's cry at Endor, "Bring me up Samuel." Oh for one word from His lips, one loving sentence from the mouth of the Great Father. "Bring me up Samuel."

Secondly: When the appetite is quickened and there is no supply, *it is an inexpressible calamity*. Such a period will come. "The day shall come," says Christ, "when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and ye shall not see it." And again, "Ye shall seek Me and not find Me, for whither I am ye cannot come." Oh miserable state of immortal souls, to be crying to the heavens, and those heavens to be as hard as brass!

NO. CIII.

Subject: MAN'S MORAL CHARACTER.

"Thus He showed me: and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in His hand. And the Lord said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more: and the high places of Isaac shall be desolate,

and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword."—Amos vii. 7-9.

"Behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumbline," viz., perpendicular. "Amos," The Lord knoweth them that are His (2 Tim. ii. 19), as He saith to Moses, "I know thee by name" (Exod. xxxiii. 12, 17). "He calleth His own sheep by name" (John x. 3). "Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel." No longer are the symbols, as in the former two, stated generally; this one is expressly applied to Israel. God's long-suffering is worn out by Israel's perversity; so Amos ceases to intercede, as Abraham did in the case of Sodom. The plummet line was used, not only in building, but in destroying houses (2 Kings xxi. 13; Isa. xxviii. 17, xxxiv. 11; Lam. ii. 8). It denotes that God's judgments are measured out by the exactest rules of justice. Here it is placed in the midst of Israel; i.e., the judgment is not to be confined to an outer part of Israel, as by Tiglath-pileser: it is to reach the very centre. This was fulfilled when Shalmanezzer, after a three years' siege of Samaria, took it, in the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Israel, and carried away Israel captive finally to Assyria (2 Kings xvii. 3, 5, 6, 23). "I will not again pass by them any more." I will not forgive them any more (chap. viii. 2; Prov. xix. 11; Micah vii. 18). "And the high places," dedicated to idols, "of Isaac." They boasted of their following the example of their forefather Isaac, in erecting high places at

Beersheba (chap. v.); but he and Abraham erected them before the Temple was appointed at Jerusalem. But they did so after the Temple had been fixed as the only place for sacrifices and worship.

The mention of Isaac and Israel is in all probability intended simply to express the names which their posterity boasted in, as if they would insure their safety; but these shall not save them. Homiletically, we may use these words as suggesting certain things concerning man's moral character.

I. There is a **KIND OF MASONRY IN THE FORMATION** of man's character. "This He showed me; and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in His hand. And the Lord said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline." A plumbline is an architectural instrument; and the wall on which the Lord stood was being measured by a plumbline. Moral masonry is suggested. Man's character may be compared to masonry in several respects.

First: It has *one foundation*. Walls are built, not upon two, but upon one foundation. So is every man's character. There is some one principle on which it is organized, some one fount to which you can trace all the streams of human activity. That principle is the paramount affection of the man. Whatever he loves most, governs him. If he loves pleasure most, his character is sensual; if he loves money most, his character is worldly. If he loves wisdom most, his character is philo-

sophic; if he loves God most, his character is Divine, etc.

Secondly: It has a *variety of materials*. In a building there are earth, lime, stones, bricks, wood, iron, etc., etc. These are brought together into a whole. Character is not formed of one set of actions, thoughts, impulses, volitions. All kinds of acts enter into it, mental, moral, muscular, personal, political, religious—all are materials in the building.

Thirdly: It is a *gradual advancement*. You cannot build a house in a day: stone by stone it must advance: so the formation of character is a slow work. Men cannot become either devils or saints at once, cannot spring into these characters by a bound. It takes time to build up a Satan, and a longer time still to build up a seraph within us.

II. There is a **DIVINE STANDARD BY WHICH TO TEST MAN'S CHARACTER**. Here is the great God standing on the wall with a "plumbline" in His hand, with which to test His people Israel. What is the Divine "plumbline" by which to test character? Here it is: "Whatsoever ye would that men

should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." Or, perhaps more intelligibly, the moral character of Christ: "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His." That spirit is love for God and men. Without love we are "nothing." Here is a plumbline. Are you *Christly*? If not, your moral masonry is not architecturally sound or symmetric. He who now stood before Amos on the wall, with a "plumbline in His hand," stands to-day amongst men with this moral test of character.

III. There is a **TERRIBLE RUIN** for those whose characters will not bear the test of this plumbline. "Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more; and the high places of Israel shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword." See this test applied on the Day of Judgment, as represented in Matt. xxv. 31-46. "When the son of God shall come in His glory," etc., etc.

THE FOLLY OF COVETOUSNESS.—After hypocrites, the greatest dupes the devil has, are those who exhaust an anxious existence in the disappointments and vexations of business, and live miserably and meanly only to die magnificently and rich. For, like the hypocrites, the only disinterested action these men can accuse themselves of, is that of serving the devil without receiving his wages. He that stands every day of his life behind a counter, until he drops from it into the grave, may negotiate many very profitable bargains; but he has made a single bad one—so bad, indeed, that it counterbalances all the rest. For the empty foolery of dying rich, he has paid down his health, his happiness, and his integrity.

Scientific Facts used as Symbols.

"Books of Illustration" designed to help preachers, are somewhat, we think, too abounding. They are often made up to a great extent of anecdotes from the sentimental side of life, and not always having a healthful influence or historic foundation. We find that preachers and hearers are getting tired of such. Albeit illustrations are needed by every speaker who would interest the people, and are sanctioned by the highest authority. Nature itself is a parable. Hence we have arranged with a naturalist who has been engaged in scientific investigation for many years, to supply the *Hemist* with such reliable and well-ascertained facts in nature, as cultured and conscientious men may use with confidence, as mirrors of morals and diagrams of doctrines.

Subject: Falling Leaves: The Ministry of the Dead to the Living.

WHEN the leaves have performed their functions, when the fruits have appeared, matured, ripened, vegetation has entered into a new phase; the leaves lose their brilliant green and assume their autumnal tints. A certain air of sadness pervades these ornaments of our fields, which proclaims their approaching dissolution. The leaves, withered and deformed, will soon cumber the ground, to be blown hither and thither by the wind. But when separated from the vegetable which has given birth to them and matured them, they are not lost to the earth which receives them. Everything in nature has its use, and leaves have their uses also in the continuous circle of vegetable reproduction. The leaves which strewed the ground at the foot of the trees, or which have been disseminated by the autumn winds over the country, perish slowly upon the soil, where they are transformed into the *humus*, or vegetable mould indispensable to the life of plants. Thus the *débris* of vegetables prepares for the coming and formation of a new vegetation. Death prepares for new life; the first and the last join their hands, so to speak, in vegetable nature, and form the mysterious circle of organic life, which has neither beginning nor end.

When man has performed his functions here and ended his labours, he too fades like the leaf and is borne away by the cold breeze of death. But like the leaf in its death, so man,

though dead, ministers to the living. He has not merely consumed so much of the productions of the earth, leaving nothing in return. He has left behind him his thoughts, acts, example, experiences, written or unwritten, and these will all perform their valuable ministration to the living as do those leaves of autumn to the younger life which grows over their graves.

Subject: Burning Metals: Man as Revealed by Society.

EVERY metal can be burned, and, heat sufficient being employed, the burning mass can be made to evolve a vapour. Every metal burns with a certain invariable colour, and the light of these colours can be projected through a prism. If so projected, a line results of certain specific size and colour across the spectral image; but if the light of a burning mass of metal be transmitted through its own vapour, then the band of colour it would have yielded on the spectrum is quenched as to colour, and the result is, not colour, but black.


As a rule, man's appearance is not pleasing when he is seen in his own isolation. His brightest and best colours are revealed through the medium of relationships. In isolation he is like a metal in its own vapours, he appears only in the melancholy colours of a recluse or an anchorite. But when beheld through the family circle, the club, the confederation, or the great and good organizations of society, he appears to a far greater advantage: in place of one dull colour his character assumes hues of beauty which gladden and delight all eyes.

Subject: Earthquakes: Evils attendant on Convulsory Action.

RIVERS are stated to have run dry sometimes during earthquakes and again begun to flow after the shock. This is presumed to arise either from the transit of an earth-wave along their courses up stream, thus damming off the sources, or from sudden elevation of the land and as sudden depression.

Convulsions, whether religious, political, or material, are attended with alarming contingencies. In times of religious revivals, common sense and reason are often dammed completely up and the wild tide of fanaticism rushes over everything. Whilst in political convulsions the liberty of the press and of the subject are either elevated in a manner absolutely dangerous to any community, or crushed into depths which plunge a country into despair. In point of fact, all sorts of convulsions are attended with all sorts of inconveniences and dangers; and no sensible man, however anxious for any change, would, in the face of facts, wish for it to be effected by that kind of phenomena.

Subject: Wounded Trees: Injured but not destroyed.

 **TREE** may be injured, and reparation is at work. The wheel of a cart, for instance, grazes the trunk, or the root of the tree is wounded by a passing ploughshare. The result is, an adventitious bud comes. Wherever these adventitious buds are seen, which come without any order, the formation is thus produced by the irritation caused by injury. The heads of a group of forest trees are cut down, but they are not destroyed. The pollarded dwarf remains to declare what the forest tree would have become but for the injury. Even the date of attack can be ascertained, for the stunted group will cover themselves with branches all of the same age and strength, which will exhibit to the sky the evidence of the storm.

Though your attempt to destroy a man's position may fail to accomplish that object, it may be productive of serious injury to him. Yet fortunately for him that very injury may afterwards bring forth good results. His friends may rally round him, his resources may be added to through the medium of the sympathetic, or he may be so acted on as to put forth power from within which developes new graces and fresh vigour.

Homiletical Brebiaries.

No. CLXXIII.

Subject: EARLY GRAVES.

"I will cause the sun to go down at noon."—Amos viii. 9.

The connection of this passage will be seen by reference to one of the "Seeds of Sermons from the Minor Prophets" in the present number.*

The words are suggestive of early graves, and those abound. The vast majority of the race die in early life, the greater number far in childhood; the sun goes down just as it appears in the horizon. Those who reach three-score years and ten form a minority that may well sadden and startle the race. Centenarians, if they exist, appear only as a solitary apple or two in the depths of winter, on a tree that was thickly clustered with fruit in the dawn of autumn. The millions that started with them are gone; they only remain, and their existence is a sadness and a warning. What do these early graves show? I. That life is absolutely in the HANDS OF GOD. Who causes the sun to go down whilst it is yet noon? He alone can arrest its majestic progress, and turn it back. It comes forth to run its circuit, but there is One and only One can turn it back. So it is with human life. The human creature seems organized to live on for years; but its Maker puts an end to its course at any time He pleases, so that the first breath is often immediately succeeded by the last. These early graves show—II. That man in all stages of life should hold himself READY TO LEAVE THE WORLD. He should regard himself, not as a settler, but as a sojourner; not as a tree, to root itself in the earth, but a bark to float down the stream to sunnier shores. These early graves show—III. That there MUST BE A FUTURE STATE for the free development of human nature. What a universe of thought and sympathy and effort are crushed in germ every year by death! Potential poets, artists, statesmen, authors, preachers, buried in early graves. Why the creation of these germs—these seeds of majestic forests? Surely the

* See Page 295.

wise and benevolent Author intended their full development; and for that there must be another world.

No. CLXXIV.

Subject: COWARDICE AND COURAGE.

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."—2 TIM. i. 7.

From these words we learn—I. That the SPIRIT of moral COWARDICE in men, is not of God. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear." Under this head we offer three remarks—First: That the spirit of moral cowardice often co-exists with physical bravery. Brute courage is a common thing, and in a moral sense often a very cowardly thing. There are men who will face the bayonet and the sword without tremor, who lack the heroism to make sacrifices for truth and conscience, etc. Secondly: That the spirit of moral cowardice is very *general* amongst men. Take any circle, and how very few truly brave men you will find—men who have the power to sacrifice popularity to principle and gold to truth, the claims of time to the claims of eternity. Thirdly: That the spirit of moral cowardice grows evermore out of sin. Our great dramatist has said: "Conscience makes cowards of us all," he should have added, guilty; for a good conscience is the soul of heroism. It is the wicked "that fleeth when no man pursueth, the righteous are strong as a lion." This spirit of moral cowardice in man is not of God. God desires us to be brave, intrepid, invincible in the fulfilment of all life's claims. II. The ELEMENTS of moral COURAGE in man are of God. What are those elements? "Power," "love," and a "sound mind." The word "power" here means courage, it stands in opposition to fear and cowardice. What are the elements of this power? First: *Love*. A man whose love is of the highest and Divinest type loses all thoughts of self in the great Object. The true patriot loses self in the love of country; the true man loses self in the love of God. This love makes a man truly brave. The other element here, of this power, is—Secondly: "*A sound mind*." A sound mind means a mind in a morally healthy state—conscience clear, faculties vigorous, love pure, aims righteous, and all the varied powers of the soul within controlled by conscience in supreme sympathy with God.

No. CLXXV.

Subject: A GOOD MAN IN A GREAT WORK.

"I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down."—NEH. vi. 8.

This narrative illustrates, I. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A GREAT WORK. It has (1) *A High Purpose*. Nehemiah's aim was to accomplish (α) a sacred, and (β) a vast work. It was (2) *Beset with difficulties*. In the spirit of the words, "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you," we may well say, Woe unto your work when all men speak well of it. For a true work will have generally to surmount (1) man's scorn (2) external hindrances. The brand of the world's hatred is often the seal of Divine approval. II. THE TEMPTATIONS THAT BESET A GREAT WORK. Here there are (1) *Temptations from armed enemies*. The true worker has to use a sword as well as a trowel. (2) *Temptations from professed friends*. Persuasions as to prudence, appearance, health, or other forms of self-interest attack those whom the opposition of foes does not touch. III. THE SPIRIT OF A TRUE WORKER. There will be (1) prayer for the work, (2) earnest prosecution of it, (3) resistance of all temptations to leave it. URIAH R. THOMAS.
Bristol.

No. CLXXVI.

Subject: DEATH-BED CONTRASTS.

"And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick : and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease. But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go, up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron? Now therefore thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed. . . . And he said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron, is it not because there is no God in Israel to inquire of His word? therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. So he died according to the word of the Lord which Elijah had spoken. And Jehoram reigned in his stead, in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah ; because he had no son."—2 KINGS i. 2-4, 16, 17.

"And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord."—2 KINGS xxi. 5.

These two royal sufferers from what seemed to each to be the chamber of death, being dead, yet speak to us and to all who will have to lie where they were, sooner or later. I. NOTICE THE POINTS OF COMPARISON AND CONTRAST. 1. *The points of comparison.* Both are (1) kings, (2) in the midst of manhood, (3) dangerously ill, (4) unwilling to die, (5) foretold that death is near, (6) uttered their longings in prayer. 2. *The points of contrast.* (1) One was impious, the other godly. (2) One prayed to idols, the other to the true God. (3) One recovered, the other soon died. II. GATHER SOME LESSONS FROM THESE COMPARISONS AND CONTRASTS. 1. *The chief events of life happen alike to all.* "There is no discharge in that warfare." 2. *Great crises lead men to look for external help.* 3. *The sources to which men look for help are most opposite and unlike.* There are two sides of a dying bed—Ahaziah turned to one side, Hezekiah to the other. One to the human: the other away from the human and towards the Divine.

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NO. CLXXVII.

Subject: A CHRISTIAN'S POSSESSIONS.

"Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."—1 COR. iii. 21-23.

This is a wonderful ownership; nowhere else in the world is there such a one. The time is coming when even to the grosser property of earth this will apply; for the heirs of heaven are not to be for ever the paupers of earth; but now it is true of all things pertaining to the realm of mind. The things our Father made are ours, not in the sense of our having any right to deprive others of them; but ours as our earthly father's home and goods were ours in the days of our childhood. Were not our parents, our brothers and sisters, was not the infant sleeping in its cradle, ours? Was not the shelter of the roof-tree ours? Was not the homestead ours? And were they not ours because we were the children of our father? If we are the children of God, we are the owners of all the good things in the universe.

The Chief Founders of the Chief Faiths.

Around no men, amongst all the millions of mankind, does so much interest gather as around the Founders of the Chief Religious Faiths of the world. Such men are sometimes almost lost in the obscurity of remote ages, or of the mystery with which they surrounded themselves or their early followers invested them. But whenever they can be discerned, their characters analysed, and their deeper experiences understood, they are found to be, not only leaders and masters of the multitudes who have adopted more or less of their creed and ritual, but also interpreters (more or less partial) of the universal yearnings of the soul of man. Such men may have seemed to sit at the fountains of human thought and feeling, and to have directed or have coloured the mysterious streams; but they have quite as often indicated in their doctrines and in their deeds the strong courses of the thoughts and feelings which are more permanent and deeper than any one man or even any one age could completely discover. The aim of these papers will be, with necessary brevity, to review the chief of such men, noting suggestively rather than exhaustively, their biography, their circumstances, their *theology*, and their *ethics*. And in concluding the series, it is proposed to compare and to contrast each and all of them with the "One Man whom in the long roll of ages we can love without disappointment and worship without idolatry, the Man Christ Jesus."

PRINCIPAL BOOKS OF REFERENCE.—Max Müller's "History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature," "The Science of Language," "Chips from a German Workshop;" Rev. F. D. Maurice's "Religions of the World;" Archdeacon Hardwick's "Christ and other Masters;" Rev. J. W. Gardner's "Faiths of the World;" Miss Mary Carpenter's "Last Days of Rammohun Roy;" Rev. F. W. Farrar's "Witness of History to Christ;" Rev. A. W. Williamson's "Journey in North China;" Canon Liddon's "Bampton Lecture on 'Our Lord's Divinity,'" Cousin's "History of Modern Philosophy;" S. Clarke's "Ten Great Religions;" Father Hue's "Christianity in China;" Carlyle's "Heroes and Hero-Worship."

SECOND SERIES.

No. III.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND MAHOMET.

FROM what we have said already of Mahomet,—*born into a* time when so much idolatry had corrupted Christendom, and into a land that favoured the freedom and chivalry of his creed, living a life of intense earnestness, and at first, at least, of great sincerity and energy and heroism, and *teaching* with tremendous emphasis doctrines about the Unity of God and obedience to Him,—it will be readily felt that we have in the founder of Islamism, not only his own, nor his age's merely, but humanity's cry for the kingdom of God.

That cry he heard echoed in his own great heart before he came consciously into contact, as he did when he travelled into Syria, with the Christian religion; and he pondered on it

in his long and frequent seasons of solitude. That cry he uttered in the wild chanting rhapsodies of the Koran, and more condensedly in its two perpetually recurring phrases, "Allah akbar," and "Islam." And the cry thus heard, thus pondered, thus uttered, he sought to meet by the inculcation of the spirit of resignation to a sort of Divine Fate, by the institution of a rigorous religious rubric, by the proclamation of a sensual heaven and a material hell, and, in no sense least of all, by a relentless sword that must never rust, but whose keen and cruel steel should everywhere and constantly compel acceptance of his dogmas and obedience to his laws.

I. The extent to which in all this he was proclaiming a truth, and was, by lip or life, rightly enforcing it, will measure for us the extent of MAHOMET'S RESEMBLANCES TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. At the outset we should remark, that such resemblances as existed in one who lived after Christ, and who is seen to have owed so much to the Christian Scriptures, are by no means so remarkable as when traced in Zoroaster, Buddha, or Confucius. Mahometanism is so plainly an effort to improve Christianity, that it has not the same sort of interest to the student as those older systems that preceded the revelation of Jesus Christ. Indeed, whatever beauty the Crescent has, is seen to be but a reflection of the lustre of the Cross. Still we notice the resemblances, that we may the more vividly mark the contrast. And here we mark the resemblances (1) *In personal character*. In the early history of Mahomet's influence, we are sure we find one of its chief elements to consist in a really noble character. He breathed a purer spirit, lived on higher levels, was both more heroic and more devout than the men by whom he was surrounded. And his reputation continued after his character had deteriorated; and that reputation wielded great power, and gathered round him almost divine homage. In this, while he resembles all the chief founders of the world's faiths, we pause to notice that he dimly resembled the Lord Jesus Christ. It is He whose foes could "find no fault in" Him, whom Inspiration declares to be "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," in

whom God is ever “well pleased,” who is “the Desire of all nations.” Others may be the stars; He is the undimmed Sun in the horizon of moral character. We mark resemblances (2) *In the doctrines promulgated.* We have shown how the two fundamental articles of the Islam faith are the Unity of God and the duty of utter obedience to Him. In this twofold teaching, Mahomet’s highest utterances are far inferior, though they may serve some as stepping-stones, to the Saviour’s grand proclamation of the One Father, before whose throne He leads all the children in the utterance of the perfect worship cry, “Thy will be done.” Another point of resemblance is (3) *In the aggressive nature of the systems.* In Mahomet’s plans and struggles for growing power, and all the wondrously successful early Mussulman campaigns, we have but a hint of Christ’s teaching to His disciples, which, it has been well said, is, “that every nation and every man exists for the purpose of chasing evil and falsehood out of God’s world”—teaching which radiates from the whole of our Lord’s words and works, and blazes from such sentences as, “I came not to give peace, but a sword,” “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Recalling these and other points of resemblance, we nevertheless soon learn that the great world-cry, as Mahomet heard it, was confused, and his efforts to satisfy it were mistaken and therefore vain. This assertion is illustrated in our second point, viz. :—

II. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN MAHOMET AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. The cry was indeed a cry for Christ, and is only fully satisfied in Christ. We have said it was a cry for God’s kingdom, and Islamism is a false effort to manifest and establish that kingdom. So we proceed to notice (1) *Christ rightly claims that kingdom.* Mahomet sought to be regarded as its vicegerent; but in glorious distinction from him Christ stands (a) *In His human character as its loftiest representative.* It is a kingdom of order, purity, perfectness. Whatever may have been the comparative beauty of Mahomet’s earlier years, we have to watch him afterwards in seasons of irreverence, cruelty, and lust. As we have seen, Goethe shows, success

ruined him morally; and if he stands as the best representative of God's kingdom, alas for that kingdom! Whereas in the Lord Jesus Christ that kingdom finds its highest possible glory. After the hours of divinest glory, such hours as tradition says Mahomet has, and which bewildered and intoxicated him, we find Christ still the meek and lowly. After hours of severest agonies we find Him tender towards men, filial towards God. Whilst even friendly historians are compelled to record in the later periods of Mahomet's life many an annal horrible with cruelty and gross with sensuality,—from the beauty and simplicity of His every hour the Son of Man can challenge His bitterest foes, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" It has been well said by Mr. Maurice, that in Jesus Christ we have "the revelation of this King. This Son of God has been manifested: He in whom this perfect Image dwelt; He has exhibited that Image in the life and acts of a man, in the poverty and death of a man; He as a man has exercised dominion over the powers of nature—as a man, wrestled with spiritual evil—as a man, triumphed over death—as a man, ascended to the right hand of God." Then we have to add—as a distinguishing difference in this matter of claims to a kingdom, we see the contrast (*β*) *In Christ's nature, as its evident Lord.* He may well say, "My kingdom;" for not only does He show kingship in the royalty of His character, but in the divinity of His power. He knows what is in man; He rises from the grave in which the world-power for a time interred Him, and by miraculous spiritual might has gathered round His cross a mightier phalanx than ever has been marshalled by a sword; and by claim, and the proof of His right to the claim, has, in times and ways without number, shown Himself to be "the Son of God with power." (*2*) *Christ infallibly reveals that kingdom.* He shows (*α*) *In what it consists.* Not, as Mahomet seemed to believe, (*i.*) mainly in outward reformation. He evidently placed no faith in what armies could do, for He taught, "The kingdom of God is within you;" and clearly a sword cannot touch a soul, artillery has no argument with conscience. Nor, as Mahomet believed, (*ii.*) in obedience to a resistless Divine Fate.

" 'One God' the Arabian prophet preached to man ;
One God the Orient still
Adora, through many a realm of mighty span,—
A God of Power and Will.

" A God that, shrouded in His lonely light,
Rests utterly apart
From all the vast creations of His might—
From Nature, Man, and Art.

" A Power that at His pleasure doth create
To save or to destroy :
And to eternal pain predestinate,
As to eternal joy."

In clearest distinctness from this, the Saviour proclaims a Parental king, unveils His glory, and calls all men to the Great One who waits to hear from His creatures' lips the trustful loving words, "Our Father who art in Heaven." (iii.) Nor does the reward of this kingdom consist, like Mahomet's, in a sensual heaven and a material hell. It is rather "He that believeth hath eternal life;" Do this or the other, "for this is right." Moreover, He reveals about that kingdom (*β*) *How it is to triumph*. Whereas Mahomet made subjects, and Islamism can produce only abject subjects, Christianity makes converts. The highest aim of its noblest and most inspired leaders is, "We persuade men;" while the watchword of its Founder is, not, obey, submit, yield, but, "Come unto Me." The great power in extending and consolidating this kingdom is a cross, not a sword;—a cross, for by sacrifice the rebellious subjects are brought into reconciliation with the king,—a cross, for by self-sacrifice the empire will be welded into unity, and will win its conquering way in the world,—a cross that tells of a victory won, and whose benefits we have to receive, and not a sword to proclaim perpetual struggle and agony to obtain,—nevertheless, a cross that reveals love as the mightiest force in the universe, and therefore leaves no place for such persecutions, and cruelties, and nameless horrors of bigotry as Mahomet himself sanctioned and the Mussulman still believes to be the way to the victory of the kingdom of God.

Bristol.

URIJAH R. THOMAS.

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

ORIGINAL SIMILITUDES.

MALIGN PASSIONS.—These are to the soul what the legions of locusts are to the vegetation of the East, they eat up all the life. Ay, worse than locusts, they are fiends, kindling fires that burn down to the very centre of being, and reduce to ashes the better part of human nature. The man who cherishes anger towards another does more mischief to himself than any enemy could inflict upon him. He who hates me can have his revenge much better by kindling wrath within me than by rifling me of all my worldly possessions, or inflicting on my person the greatest tortures.

THE HEART.—In scripture the heart stands for the whole man, including the rational and moral parts. Man's great work is with his *heart*. It is a soil crusted by sin, covered with weeds, thorns, and thistles; its fallow ground must be broken up, its noxious productions uprooted, the incorruptible seed must be sown. It is a temple, but it is defiled by depravity and infested with demons. The fiends must be exorcised, and its precincts must be cleansed. It is a harp whose every string was made to vibrate with the praise of the great Father, but it is unstrung and incapable of true moral music.

THE FACE.—This is the soul's dial-plate; it notifies all the revolutions within. Thoughts

chisel their likeness on the brow, passions paint their hue upon the cheek. True godliness gives man a sunny face.

INSTABILITY.—This is not only weakness but misery; mental distraction is feebleness and woe. Godliness brings firmness, it gives the soul a firm rooting in truth, and makes it as calm amidst the billows of life as the rock that breaks in pieces its surging assailants.

THE MEMORY OF SORROW.—The godly man's suffering will be one day only a thing of memory. Have you ever seen a river rolling backward, and retracing its march? Never! And never will the sorrows of a good man return; they are gone for ever. Flow on, then, thou stream of life, and bear away our trials! Thou wilt get clearer, deeper, and calmer as thou nearest the blue, broad, boundless sea of eternity. It will be pleasant to remember them when they are gone; it will inspire us with the grateful and devout.

LOVE.—Love is above all law; it is always lawful to do good. There is a thing called philanthropy on earth, that is restricted by sects, bounded by rules, and operates only through certain organizations; this is not the Divine thing. The Divine thing is as free as the air and all-encompassing as the heavens. Divine philanthropy courts not applause, and seeks

no reward but in the good it does.

THE DEPARTURE OF LIFE.—As the exit of the soul from the body ruins the body, the exit of hope from the soul ruins the soul. When hope takes her exit from the soul, all beauty departs, all pleasures end, all usefulness is gone. A mind under despair is hideous, wretched, powerless.

THE CHANGES OF MODERN SOCIETY.—Men are not now, as our ancestors were, like rooted trees remaining from year to year in the same place; they are rather like logs of wood on the surging sea, borne swiftly hither and thither by the force of wind and wave, jostling against each other and never at rest. In every walk of life there is this hurry; the faculties of all seem on the stretch. Men are out of breath, they pant with excitement, all is helter-skelter. They seem to eat their meals now as the Jews ate the Passover, with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, their staff in hand, ready to start.

HAPPINESS.—I have read that in one of our English cathedrals there lie the remains of a rich man who had inscribed by his own wish on the stone, "*Miserimus*"—most miserable. There is nothing in gold to satisfy the craving of an immortal spirit. Happiness cannot be bought, it comes without money and without price.

SILENCE.—Souls can only really grow as the tree, which rises to strength and majesty by hiding its roots in solitude and silence. The noblest building in Judea was the Temple erected by Solomon on Moriah's sacred brow. But it was reared in silence;

there was neither "hammer or axe, nor any tool of iron heard while it was building." Even so with the noblest character, it requires calm, deep, devout silence for its erection. Men are like barrels, the more empty the more noise.

DEPRAVITY UNIVERSAL.—The elements of the devil are in every man, though he may not know it. The vulture-eggs of evil are in all depraved hearts; it only requires a certain heat of the outward atmosphere to hatch them into life, to give them virus, vigour, and wing.

FALL FROM VIRTUE.—Souls can fall from virtue swiftly as the shooting stars. One hour they may blaze in the firmament, the next, lie deep in the mud. "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me: try my reins and my heart."

DEVELOPMENT.—The soul contains the seeds of all that it will ever be. Man will never be more than himself; all the germs of his everlasting paradise are within him. But the religious idea is the quickening and unfolding power. The soul can no more be educated without God than the earth can be made fruitful without the sun. Moral character is the *fruit*, not the occasional actions of a man's life.

THE GODLY POOR.—The bread and water of the poor are of more value in the universe than the lordly estates of the proud worldling. They have a quality and a taste in them that no amount of worldly wealth possesses. As the waters that flow from the aromatic hills of the East are sweetly seasoned with their spicy springs, so the little of the good man is seasoned

with the good-will of heaven. The godly man's little is a priceless diamond flashing with the approbation of God; but the riches of the wicked, however abundant, are but rubbish in the sight of heaven. Afflicted, oppressed, paupered man of God, envy not the wicked; keep the fiend at bay; let not his breath touch thy spirit; do the right, have confidence in the justice of the universe, and calmly await the great explaining and balancing day.

THE POSSIBILITIES OF HUMAN NATURE.—Poor humanity here seems base enough, polluted, ignorant, weak, miserable, and degraded. Its aspect sometimes saddens our hearts and makes us ashamed of our nature. Albeit, in the most degraded there slumber the germs of angelic powers. The human soul, in truth, even in its basest condition, is an angel whose eyes are dimmed, whose pinions are crippled, and whose plumage is stained with the filth of depravity. We see even here oftentimes bright angels rising out of humanity.

FAINT YET PURSUING.—As the eagle, when driven down to the earth by tempests, keeps its wings expanded, watches for the first gleam of sunshine, and then towers away, so let godly souls, while down on this earth, keep their eyes on heaven, and hail the time for flight. True worship is the soul's only heaven.

A TRUE MINISTER.—He is the organ of Christ, not of *creeds*. His object is to set forth, not human opinions and theories, but Christ Himself, the living, loving Son of God, to manifest Him to men.

CONVERSION, A PERSONAL ACT.

—Here is a clock. The works are all right, the hands point to the right time, and it is all properly wound up. Everything is in prime order, and ready to go. But it does not go. What is the matter? You look at it an hour hence, and the hands have not stirred. You move them forward, and leave it, and the next hour you have got to set them again. This sort of work you may keep at for ever. As long as the pendulum is not moved, the clock will not go. Let *that* begin to tick, and all is at once right and busy. Now, let those persons who are all wound up, just begin to tick. Start your pendulum, and the trouble is over.

CONVERSION, THE PROOF OF ITS REALITY.—When the king's image is stamped upon the wax, everything in the wax answers to that in the seal, face to face, eye to eye, body to body. So we are said to be sealed when we carry in our souls the image of the Lord Jesus; for the Spirit sets the stamp of Christ upon every true convert. There is the likeness of Christ in all things to be found in him. As the child answers the father, foot for foot, finger for finger, in proportion, but not in quantity, so it is in the sealing of a believer. There is a likeness in the soul that is sealed by the Spirit to the Lord Jesus.

CONVICTION, A DIVINE WORK.—It is with the children of men as with the housewife, that having diligently swept her house, and cast the dust out of doors, can see nothing amiss, not so much as a speck of dust in it; whereas if the sun do

but a little shine in, through some cranny in the wall or some broken quarry in the window, she may soon see the whole house swim and swarm with innumerable atoms of dust floating to and fro in the air, which, for dimness of light or sight, before she was not able to discern. Even so it is with many that are careful of their ways, so that little may be seen amiss that might require either reformation or amendment; yet when they shall come to look more attentively into God's law, a little beam of light, reflecting upon their souls from it, will discover unto them such an innumerable company, as well of corruptions in their hearts as of errors and oversights in their lives, that it shall make them, as men amazed, cry out, Lord, what earthly man doth know the errors of his life?

DEATH INEVITABLE.—Man is, as it were, a book; his birth is the title-page, his baptism the epistle dedicatory; his groans and crying, the epistle to the reader; his infancy and childhood, the argument or contents of the whole ensuing treatises; his life and actions are the subject; his sins and errors, the faults escaped; his repentance, the correction. As for the volumes, some are in folio, some in quarto, some in octavo, etc.; some are fairer bound,

some plainer; some have piety and godliness for their subject; others, and they too many, are mere romances, pamphlets of wantonness and folly; but in the last page of every one there stands a word, which is *Finis*, and this is the last word in every book. Such is the life of man: some longer, some shorter; some stronger, some weaker; some fairer, some coarser; some holy, some profane. But death comes in like *finis*, at the last, and closes up all; for that is the end of all.

THE UNCERTAINTY OF DEATH.—Nothing is more uncertain. Belshazzar is sitting at a feast. On a sudden comes death, like a voider, to take him away. Hereupon his face, so coloured with the wine, begins to look pale and ghastly with fear. His hands, that lifted up the massy goblets in defiance of their Owner, tremble like a leaf in a storm. His knees, that never stooped to his Creator, are loosened with a sudden palsy of terror. All, because death hath written him a challenge on the wall, and he dares not answer it. As Noah's dove went out of the ark and came into the ark, went out again and came in again, at last went out and came in no more, so it is with our breath; it goes out and comes in, comes in and goes out, at last goes out and comes in no more.

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

THE NAMES ON THE GATES OF PEARL, AND OTHER STUDIES. BY REV. C. H. WALLER, M.A. London: Sampson, Low, & Searle, Fleet Street.

The following extract from the Preface will make our readers acquainted with the nature and object of this book. "The names on the Gates of Pearl are those of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. The perpetuation of these names in a city where there is neither Jew nor Gentile, but all are one in Christ Jesus, seems to give them an extension as wide as the Church of Christ. All who enter the New Jerusalem must enter by the gate of some tribe, and may be said to pass in as members of that tribe. Hence it appears that the tribes severally, as well as the Israelites collectively, may be regarded as 'types of us.' With this view I have endeavoured to trace the character and experience of each of the tribes of Israel in the Word of God. In order to do so, it was necessary to collect and arrange all the passages where any one of the tribes is named. And, except in the case of Judah, whose history occupies a large portion of the Old Testament, this has been done. The chief difficulty has been to discover the true spiritual bearing of the history in every case. I have had no beaten path to follow; for I have not met with any history of the tribes which has been written with the same object. If my imperfect attempts may be of any use to others who will succeed better, I shall be satisfied. That such a view of the history of the tribes is admissible, I think has been sufficiently established. Errors in points of detail can scarcely invalidate the proof of this. The other studies in this book will partly serve to illustrate the history of one tribe or other; but the main object of all that has been written is to direct attention to the details of Scripture History, and to remind the reader that every detail has been given, more or less, for the sake of one person—the Lord Jesus Christ. 'The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.' Thus the motive of all inspiration is to bear witness of Him. When holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, it was for His sake. To bear witness of Jesus is the purport of the whole Bible. The book

was begun that it might be rehearsed in the ears of Joshua; and the angels who came to the beloved disciple in that revelation which enabled him to complete the sacred volume, confessed themselves 'fellow-servants of them that have the testimony of Jesus, and keep the sayings of this book.' From first to last the Bible is a book about the things of Jesus Christ and the world in reference to Him. It is not accommodation, therefore, as some would tell us, to apply Old Testament narrative and prophecy to Him. 'The Scriptures,' He told us, 'are they which testify of Me?'"

There is much in this work both to interest and instruct the Biblical student. Although some of its speculations may have very unsubstantial foundations, they nevertheless stimulate thought and start useful inquiries. In reading, we often find works that strike hard against the tenets of our creed and the data of our reasonings, of more mental service than works that propound only what accord with our prepossessions and conclusions: they challenge our intellect, lead us to re-investigate the foundations of our belief, and tend to make us *independent and self-reliant*.

THE TWENTY SERMONS PREACHED IN ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH, BRIGHTON.

By REV. HAY AITKEN, M.A. Reported verbatim by CHARLES VERRALL.
London: Dickenson and Higham, 73, Farringdon Street.

The author of these sermons is one of the few revival preachers in the Church of England. His theology is the current creed, many of whose leading dogmas the thinking men of all Churches are renouncing. His appeals are to the hopes and fears of men; salvation, rather than holiness, is the burden of his ministrations. He does not seem to regard religion as the sublimest end, but a means to avoid a hell and to get into heaven. Indeed, in this he agrees with nearly all of what are called revival preachers, Charles Finney being one of the glorious exceptions. Far enough are we from pronouncing condemnation on such ministries. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he must stand or fall." These revivalists, though, as we think, mistaken in much of their theology and modes of appeal, may still be useful; and we believe they are. They sound the trumpet of alarm, and startle dormant souls. The author of these sermons seems to be one of the best of his class. He is intelligent, serious, and intensely earnest. His soul is aflame. His style is unpretentious. No attempt is made at oratoric grandeur. He is conversational, talks to man as man, in plain, homely, every-day phraseology. In this, as well as in earnestness, he is a model. Take the following illustration as an example:—"Suppose I came to England for the first time, and I saw a great big ball, the size of this dome; and I said to my guide, 'What in the world is that? I have never seen anything like it before; it is a most curious thing.' He replies, 'I know what that is—it is a great balloon.' 'What is the

meaning of that?' I ask. 'Don't you know what a balloon is?' 'No, what is it?' 'It is a thing intended to fly up in the air.' 'What, that great big thing, almost as big as this dome! How can that stop up in the air? You ridiculous man; do you think you are going to make a fool of me? You think because I am a foreigner you can gull me in any way you like.' He replies, 'I assure you it is intended to do what I say.' I turn round on him very savagely and say, 'Don't talk to me in that ridiculous way; if it were intended to go up in the air, why does it not?' 'I will explain it to you; don't be so impatient; step inside this yard.' There I see three or four great cables. I put my hand to them, they are quite firm, I cannot shake them. 'What makes them so tight?' 'Because there is a power in them to keep down a great weight. That balloon is tugging and tearing, and trying to rise.' 'What is it that keeps it down?' 'Those cables.' My guide takes out a little tiny pen-knife and begins sawing at the cables. He cuts one through. There is a jerk of the canvas; he cuts another, and another, till he reaches the last; he scarcely touches it before away flies the balloon right up into the air."

These sermons were taken down in shorthand, and are published from the reporter's M.S., with the author's consent, who also pronounces them a faithful record of what he said.

GLANCES THROUGH THE GATES; OR, SKETCHES OF PARADISE. By REV. A. BRANLAND, F.G.S. London: G. Lamb, Sutton Street, Commercial Road.

Perhaps we could not do better in the way of informing our readers as to the character of this book than by transcribing the following extract from the Preface:—"These sketches were written to encourage the people of God in their pilgrimage through this world to a better one. Glancing backwards through the gates of the earthly Eden, we see a Paradise which is lost; but looking forwards, we glance through the gates of yon celestial city and see another Paradise, which is the heaven of heavens; where the tree of life grows on the banks of that river 'which proceedeth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.' Not that we exhaust the subjects herein treated of; they are only glanced at. They are sketches of the origin of the globe, the creation of man, the garden of Eden, man's primeval state, his fall, and his expulsion from the garden. In the second part of this work we have an outline of man redeemed, renewed, and sanctified; so rendered 'meet for the inheritance of saints in light.' Relying on the promises of God that such shall enter into Paradise, we leave the earth in our imagination, and enter through the gates and glance at the beautiful position, at the bliss of the saints, at the society of angels, and at the perpetuity of their glorious home."

There is not a little scientific information in this book, and a goodly amount of Biblical exposition. The Author has produced an acceptable volume, one that is creditable alike to his head and heart.

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS, FROM THIS WORLD TO THAT WHICH IS TO COME.
By JOHN BUNYAN. WITH A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR. London: The Book Society, Paternoster Row.

This volume contains nothing new. With the life of Bunyan and his "Pilgrim's Progress" nearly all who read are familiar. The illustrations, however, which are not very abundant, are new, considerably artistic, and striking. It is a volume very suitable as a present for the young.

PANAMA. London: Elliot Stock, Paternoster Row.

This is an admirable tractate; it is *multum in parvo*; it has the seeds of volumes. The following passage, generally misunderstood, often controverted with savage sectarianism, but vital most vital withal, the Author expounds: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever" (John vi. 53-58). His views are so sensible, so practical, and accord so thoroughly with what we have often propounded, that we subjoin them for the benefit of our readers. "The sum of this marvellous discourse is, that the food which He calls His flesh and blood, or heavenly bread, gives now to the recipient eternal life; and that he that does not partake of it has no life. This is exhaustive and vital; and we must now try to find out what this heavenly bread is, and how to get it. We must, however, clearly see what it is not. I. It is not the mortal body of flesh and blood in which He lived during His sojourn upon earth. This is manifest for the following reasons—(1) The heavenly bread came down from heaven; but His mortal flesh and blood did not come from heaven in any sense whatever. They were, like our own, composed of earthly materials. 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,' so neither can they come from thence. (2) The saints of the Old Dispensation had the same needs as ourselves, and, as they were spiritual men, must have been fed upon this heavenly food. 'All our fathers did eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink;

for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.' (3) That which is fed by this food shall not die, therefore it is the undying spirit that this feeds; and mortal flesh cannot feed spirit, they having nought in common. II. It has to be remarked that this food has no necessary connection with the so-called "Lord's Supper:" because multitudes partake of that who have *not* spiritual life, and many who never partook of it *have*. The Society of Friends, having no sacraments, has grown some of the most robust Christians the world has seen. III. It is not the mortal body of Christ, said to be changed by priestly manipulation from bread and wine. Such legerdemain, were it possible, would avail nothing. 'The flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you are spirit and life.' Besides, this assumption by a self-styled priesthood has nothing to show for it but their interpretations of a few texts of Scripture. What then is it to eat and drink the body and blood of Christ? 'He that eateth Me shall live by Me.' The analogy of nature must be kept steadily in view here. The healthy condition of every animal at any given time is the result of all the nutritious food it has consumed. The nourishment is absorbed into the blood, and 'the blood is the life.' The order of nature is, hunger, food, growth. In like manner 'to eat and drink the flesh and blood of the Son of Man,' is to absorb into the spirit and assimilate the essential qualities of His nature, 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness (*δικαιοσύνη*, perfection), for they shall be filled.' Therefore such as hunger after inward purity, gentleness, humility, meekness,—in short, Christ-likeness,—are drawing down into themselves this one real life. But those only get the heavenly food who hunger for it, for none else can eat. Moreover, all are supplied according to the strength of their desire. 'According to thy faith (hunger), so be it unto thee.' So that the same order obtains here as in nature, viz., hunger, food, and growth. This then is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and this is His redemption. It is to become a partaker of the Divine nature."

BOOKS RECEIVED.

NINETY-THREE. By VICTOR HUGO. London: Sampson Low.—PASTORAL THEOLOGY. By the late PATRICK FAIRBAIRN. Edinburgh: T. & T. CLARK.—PHOSPHOROS. By Lieut-Colonel BAKER. London: W. Macintosh.—HALL'S VINEYARD. By MAUDE JEANNE FRANC. London: Sampson Low.—CLERICAL POLICY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. By H. VAN STEEL. London: Hatchards.—GOD IN CONSCIOUSNESS. By JOSEPH MORRIS. London: Hodder & Stoughton.—STRAY THOUGHTS ON OUR LOCAL PREACHERS. By one of them. London: Elliot Stock.



A HOMILY

ON THE

Temple of the Future.—A Symbol of the Kingdom of God.

No. XIX.

"Thou son of man, show the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities : and let them measure the pattern. And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, show them the form of the house, . . . and all the laws thereof."—EZEKIEL xl. to xlv., chiefly chapter xliii., verses 10 and 11.

IN inquiring first into THE PRIMARY AND LOCAL MEANING of this vision we are met with several plausible theories of it. There is what Dr. Fairbairn calls the "*historico-literal*" interpretation, which sees in these elaborate chapters a description of the Temple commonly called Solomon's, that Ezekiel had known well and revered greatly in the days before his exile ; and the object in giving this description of a then ruined edifice was, that in the future times of national regeneration to which we have seen so many of his prophecies point, the Jews should seek as far as possible to restore it. But if this

view were adopted, we must completely separate this vision and those connected with it, of the distribution of the land and the arrangement of the commonwealth, which are evidently associated with it. It is impossible that they could be historic, and so it is unlikely that this one of an intimately connected series would be. Moreover, there are many contrasts between the temple thus described and Solomon's Temple, which it is supposed is here intended to be described. Then, what is called the "*historico-ideal*" interpretation, which asserts that the vision gives specifications of a literal Temple that ought actually to be built by the Jews, is untenable for two reasons. First, it would be unjust to charge Israel with utter disobedience to Divine command, which we should then have to do, for the orders were in no manner obeyed in the edifice erected by Zerubbabel. And secondly, it would have been a physical impossibility to have erected a structure on the dimensions assigned to this Temple, with the mode of distribution of land and arrangement of river here described. Nor is the "*Jewish carnal*" view any better. This foretells that here we have an accurate description of a Temple that shall be erected when the Jews repossess Canaan. There is very much reason against accepting that interpretation; for, first, has not the Saviour emphatically brought in for ever the time when "neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem is the Father to be worshipped"? Besides, would not such intense care for details of structure and ceremony be a return to the "beggarly elements" from which, the Epistle to themselves says, Christian Hebrews have been delivered? And moreover, what place or need is there for the sacrifices here described, now that the Lamb of God "has offered one sacrifice for sins for ever," and "by one offering, for ever perfected them that are sanctified"? The interpretation to be accepted seems clearly that

which is called,—scarcely accurately, but we know no better name for it,—“*the Christian spiritual*” view. That view sees here mainly a prediction of the good times God has revealed for His kingdom among men : a kingdom here set forth, naturally to a priestly prophet, under the figure of a Temple. Probably Ezekiel, in looking forward to the regeneration of the Jewish people, did, as Mr. Maurice well shows he, from education and habit and sympathy as a priestly seer, would naturally do, anticipate the re-erection of a Temple. For to him a nation without a Temple as its sacred centre, would be an anomaly. He would feel “that that collection of goodly stones expressed the presence of a one living Being, that it denoted the unity of the tribes, that it spoke of a bond of fellowship for all nations, that it declares justice and order to be the foundation of all society.” And so predicting, as we have seen he has in many of the strange series of his visions, the complete *renaissance* of Israel, he, in this crowning vision of the series, gathers up all his hallowed hopes for the nation into the symbols connected with a Temple and its surroundings. It is not in the structure itself, but in all for which it witnessed, and all it illustrated that there is the real pith of the prophecy, the kernel of the vision. With all the detailed minutiae of this edifice there is strikingly little said about the material of which it is to be built. For that very reason it the better stands as a symbol of a temple of living stones. Yet, that it may be very real to prophetic seer and to listening people, there is this very definite, detailed representation of a building. They are, however, not to be read as a mere architect’s specifications, but as a prophet’s hope, and a Divine promise. And as the people’s hopes respond, and they begin to covet the possession again in their midst of a Temple, and all a Temple signified, they are to be taught that they must first be “ashamed of

their iniquities." The gross and now nameless sins into which they had fallen must be abandoned. And then to the hands of men of repentant and pure hearts should be given the very details of the plans and the moral law too of the sacred house they long to see re-established; and the re-establishment of which should at once typify and advance the presence among them of the true kingdom of God.

So we come to notice the **PERMANENT AND UNIVERSAL** meaning of the vision,—its teaching about the kingdom of God.

This vision illustrates for us,—

I. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.—Are we not reminded,—*It is sacred.* The selection of portions of time for sabbaths, of families of men for priests, seems to have been chiefly designed to teach what is meant by setting apart of time or men to high and holy purposes, so that afterwards we may learn how all time and all men may be so set apart. So the setting apart of one building as a Temple, teaches how spaces and places and services may be devoted to high and holy purposes. The wall and gates and guard chambers here described seem planned only to give the idea of sacredness. The teaching here of the nation's golden age is that the Commonweath is a Temple. For God it is to exist; in His service all its members must engage; nay, in the very nation itself, as in a sanctuary of living stones, He will dwell. Its rich and its poor, its cultured and its ignorant, its art, its science, its commerce, its festivals, are all to be sanctified. We cannot forbear quoting Mr. Maurice's eloquent words: "Every portion of human life, the forms of society, the roughest stone, the richest marble, as well as the thoughts and feelings which fashion them into shape and symmetry, must be devoted to the expression of that truth which has come to restore and

regenerate the universe." Then we notice about that kingdom,—*It is conspicuous.* This Temple stands on a very high mountain, and so standing is of course prominent and widely seen. How true an emblem of the kingdom of God! for goodness, like its Incarnate Pattern and Inspirer, cannot be hid. Righteousness in men is to be as a candle, not under a bushel, but on a candlestick; while love must ever be like the fragrance of the very precious ointment, which, as soon as the alabaster box was broken, filled the house. *It is vast.* Not only has it many gates and is thus accessible from every quarter, but it is reckoned that the measurements of the Temple and land, as seen by Ezekiel, would give a Temple larger than all Jerusalem, and a Jerusalem larger than all the land of Canaan. So we have a beautiful indication of the growing influence of the kingdom of God. It is not narrow in nationality, straitened in sectarianism, as they think who "limit the Holy One of Israel." Its King is He who has predicted, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw *all* men unto Me." *It is complete.* The particularization of the details of the Temple Ezekiel saw, is so minute, that, excepting as we judge it by similar minute particularizations in his other visions, we should be compelled to consider it must be literal. But it is rather an emphatic method of showing Divine knowledge of and care for every, even the smallest detail of the kingdom of truth amongst men. There is the arrangement of every porch, and pillar, and chamber, and sill-piece in the Temple; the care for every branch of the vine, and for every member of the body, and for every bone in the vast resuscitated army in the Valley of Vision. By such figures, Old and New Testament teaching conspire to impress us with the fact that, in God's kingdom, there is added "to faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience

godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity." *It is sacrificial.* Of course we find in the delineation of the Temple, altars, and in the ritual for the house, directions for priests and arrangements for slaying animals for sacrifice. And in the great temple of truth and goodness, though now there is no need for sacrifice for sin, since the propitiation for the world's sin has died, there is, and there will ever be, for discipline and for development of the highest life, the many altars of daily self-denials, the high altar of complete self-sacrifice. *It is beautiful.* Amongst the adornments Ezekiel described, were the cherubim, the symbol of ideal creature-life, and the palm-trees, the boughs of whose feathery foliage, beautiful in themselves, were the chosen signs of victory. So morally "strength and beauty," the strength of the sterner and the beauty of the gentler virtues, "are in the sanctuary" of God's kingdom. *It is God-inhabited.* The return of God to dwell in the Temple is the climax of the vision, the crown of all its glory. This prophecy shall be fulfilled only when the nations can truly sing, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them; and they shall be His people, and He will be their God." The light that filled the material structure is the impressive emblem of the Saviour's presence as the Light of the World, a presence felt and revealed by all who are Christly men, who with reality can say, "We have the mind of Christ." He walks in the midst of the Churches, inspires all, and reigns over all.

Such are some of the many points that are analogically suggested here about the kingdom of God.

II. THE QUALIFICATION FOR HAVING TO DO WITH THIS KINGDOM. With a simplicity and directness that makes it very clear even in midst of so strange a vision, there is here proclaimed the condition on which men may have

the detailed plan of this future Temple given to them. They are to have a glance at the house as a whole, and if they are fascinated with its glory, and begin to glow with the hope of enjoying its privileges, they will surely begin to be ashamed of their own sins. The Divine order and purity and goodness will shame their disorder, impurity, and evil. Then, if they are truly humbled by a sense of God's loving-kindness to them in giving them a pledge of His presence in their great unworthiness of it, they become fit to study His designs for their own and the world's salvation. Whilst the Jews were living as they were, they could not understand the elements of such a kingdom as God would have them and all men enter. So the prophet had to repeat his old and many times agonizing effort to bring them to repentance. This is the one first requirement of all men. We need to be humbled by some revelation of God's great and undeserved love. This we have in Jesus Christ. "The goodness of God leadeth to repentance." We need to feel the contrast between our actual state and God's ideal; this we also have in Jesus Christ. That humbling, that sense of shame, is but another way in which there is fulfilled in us the Baptist's teaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," or the Saviour's condition of the way to the blessed life: "Except ye be converted, ye cannot see the kingdom of God." For our own entrance into the kingdom that this Temple typifies, and as our qualification for doing any true work in rearing that kingdom among men, there must be first of all personal penitence. Repentant men are the men to whom, for themselves and for others, are revelations of duty, and inspirations of earnestness and hope. Such men become indeed temples of God, for "thus saith the High and Holy One, . . . I dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the

humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Such men will be thoroughly and bitterly "ashamed" of will-worship, mammon-worship, every form of self-worship, and will be eager to study and earnest to attain to higher and holier life for themselves and for others.

Bristol.

URUJAH R. THOMAS.

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Psalms.

Our Purpose.—Many learned and devout men have gone philologically through this *Psalm*, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal hermeneutics of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough *homiletic* treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

Our Method.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1) The *History* of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2) *Annotations* of the passage. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase, or allusion that may occur.—(3) The *Assessment* of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is amongst the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4) The *Homiletic* of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavour so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately deduced, as to suggest such thoughts, and indicate such sermonising methods, as may promote the proficiency of modern pulpit ministrations.

Subject: The Community of Godly Men.

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised," etc.—*PSALM* *xlvi.* 1-14.

HISTORY.—"This Psalm, like the forty-sixth, is, by Delitzsch and others, referred to the times of Jehoshaphat, as the psalm in which the miraculous discomfiture of the combined kings of Moab, Ammon, and Edom, in the wilderness of Tekoa, was celebrated: an occasion which it suits very well. But I cannot help agreeing with Weiss in considering it a production of David's pen, and written to celebrate some of the earlier triumphs in that series of conflicts with the Syrians and Ammonites, the termination of which is sung in the forty-sixth psalm."

By this time Zion had been recovered from the Jebusites, and adorned with stately palaces, and thoroughly fortified (2 Sam. v. 9), and the Ark of God located on it; and David would be found to draw towards it the affections and hopes of his people as the chosen residence of their God and Saviour."—*D. Hapstone, M.A.*

ANNOTATIONS: Ver. 1.—"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God." This means Jerusalem. "In the mountain of his holiness"—Mount Zion.

Ver. 2.—"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King." Dr. Thomson, in "The Land and the Book," answers the question "What is there or was there about Zion to justify the high eulogium of David?" "The situation is indeed eminently adapted to be the platform of a magnificent citadel. Rising high above the deep valley of Gihon and Hinnom on the west and south and the scarcely less deep one of the Cheesemongers on the east, it could only be assailed from the north-west; and then on the sides of the north it was magnificently beautiful, and fortified by walls, towers, and bulwarks, the wonder and terror of the nations. 'For the kings were assembled, they passed by together. They saw it so they marvelled, they were troubled and hasted away.' At the thought of it the royal psalmist again bursts forth in triumph, 'Walk about Zion and go round about her,' etc. Alas! her towers have long since fallen to the ground, her bulwarks have been thrown down, her palaces crumbled to the dust, and we who walk about Zion can tell no other story to the generation following."

Ver. 3.—"God is known in her palaces for a refuge." "Elohim in her palaces became known as a stronghold."—*Delitzsch.* God, not granite bulwarks, nor even mountains or standing armies, was the protection of Jerusalem.

Ver. 4.—"For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together." Who were the "kings" that gathered together, and on what occasion did they meet? This question cannot be answered with certainty; probably some foreign kings had on some occasion assembled together in order to besiege Jerusalem.

Ver. 5.—"They saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away." As the royal vultures gazed upon it they were so struck with its grandeur and strength that all hopes of conquering it vanished; and, amazed and bewildered, they fled away.

Ver. 6.—"Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail."—The figure here is of frequent occurrence in the Bible. Jer. iv. 21, vi. 24, xiii. 21, xxii. 28, xxx. 6, xlix. 24; Mic. iv. 9, 10; Isa. liii. 11. The idea is, that panic-struck they fled away in utter consternation.

Ver. 7.—"Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind." Whether this refers to an historic event or is merely used as a metaphor, scarcely matters. God can and does break the strongest

ships with a breath of wind; and as easily can He break the purposes of monarchs and nations. It is, however, an interesting coincidence that a disaster similar to this did befall the navy of Jehoshaphat (1 Kings xxii. 49; 2 Chron. xx. 37).

Ver. 8.—“*As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever.*”—The meaning of this is, What we have heard from others we have seen, viz., that God is in our midst and will defend us.

Ver. 9.—“*We have thought of Thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of Thy temple.*” “We thought, Elohim, of Thy lovingkindness in the midst of Thy temple.”—*Delitzsch*. What they had seen themselves of His lovingkindness they compared with what their fathers had told them, and this they did in the temple.

Ver. 10.—“*According to Thy name, O God, so is Thy praise unto the ends of the earth.*” “As is Thy name, Elohim, so is Thy praise unto the ends of the earth.” Wherever Thou art known, Thou wilt be praised. “*Thy right hand is full of righteousness.*” God’s “right hand” is His executive power, and that executive power is instinct with righteousness, filled and fired with it.

Ver. 11.—“*Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of Thy judgments.*” The daughters of Judah “may denote the smaller cities in the tribe of Judah, that surrounded Jerusalem as the mother city, in accordance with a usage quite common in the Hebrew Scriptures.”

Ver. 12.—“*Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof.*” Encircle Zion and count her towers, and mark the perfect state of her defences, as untouched by recent dangers.

Ver. 13.—“*Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.*” Study well her defences, that you may be able to transmit a correct account to posterity. Dr. Thomson, in his admirable book (p. 29) already quoted, gives an account of the ancient defences of Jerusalem.

Ver. 14.—“*For this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death.*” “For this God our God for ever and ever. He will guide us unto death.”—*Alexander*. Some say it means, beyond death.

ANALYSIS.—This psalm celebrates (1) Jerusalem as the residence of Jehovah, and as having been recently saved by Him—ver. 1-8. (2) On account of this, He is worthy of praise from age to age—ver. 9-14.

HOMILETICS.—Homiletically this psalm may be regarded as a symbolical representation of the community of godly men. I prefer this expression to that of the “Church of God,” because the term *church*, as employed in these days, is an unmeaning cant. Etymologically, in the Greek, it means an assembly; and in

these modern times it is applied often to an assembly of ignoramuses, hypocrites, sectaries, and bigots. The true Church is a community of godly men, and members of this community are found, perhaps, often in connection with conventional churches, and often in connection with none. "The Church on earth and all the dead, but one communion make." Looking at the psalm in this light, we learn that this community is *divinely social, imposingly beautiful, beneficently influential, triumphantly powerful, socially commanding, infinitely affluent, and religiously meditative.*

I. It is **DIVINELY SOCIAL**. It is a "city." "The city of our God." Jerusalem is its symbol. There are many fellowships amongst men—commercial, literary, scientific, political—that are not Divine. The society of godly men is a *Divine* society.

First: God is the chief *object of adoration* in this city. "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, in the city of our God." God is the centre of this community. Around Him they all revolve, from Him they all derive their light, their life, their order, their beauty. They all meet in Him.

Secondly: God is the chief *resident* in this city. He is "known in her palaces." He is the very centre of their being. They are the temples for the Holy Ghost to dwell in.

Thirdly: God is the *absolute Monarch* of this city. It is "the city of the great King." He rules them as their absolute Lord and Master. They obey God rather than man.

Fourthly: God is the *effective guardian* of this city. Like Jerusalem it is attacked on all hands; the powers of darkness gather round it. But He is known in "her palaces for a refuge." The enemies come, they look, and panic-struck they hasten away. "On this rock will I build My Church," etc. This community, this true Church, is then a Divine social State, a State in which God is the chief Object of adoration, the chief Resident, the absolute Monarch and the effective Guardian. Oh, when will this Jerusalem, which has come down from heaven, fill the earth?

II. It is **IMPOSINGLY BEAUTIFUL**. "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion."

"Fair Jerusalem,
The holy city, lifted high her towers,
And higher yet the glorious temple reared
Her pile, far off appearing like a mount
Of alabaster, topt with golden spires."—*John Milton.*

What is more beautiful, more imposingly grand, than a community of godly men in a neighbourhood? "Mark them well," "go round about them," look into them, study their principles. Incorruptibly honest in the market; tender, pure, and loving in the family; loyal and philanthropic in the State; reverent truth seekers in the universe; supremely in sympathy with the Christly everywhere. "Mark the perfect man and behold the upright." Moral goodness is the highest beauty, it is the beauty of holiness, the beauty of God Himself. Souls everywhere are made to admire it; it forms all that is beautiful and picturesque in the landscape of the moral universe.

III. It is BENEFICENTLY INFLUENTIAL. It is "the joy of the whole earth." What would the human world be without the community of godly men? Who built our asylums? Who created our best literature? Who has given us our most wholesome laws? Take from the world all the blessings that godly men have conferred upon it, and you reduce it to a moral desert, nay, a pandemonium. This city, this community, is "the joy of all the earth." It is the "light of the world," the "salt of the earth," the vitality in the atmosphere, the showers that make the fields fruitful and clothe the landscape with beauty.

IV. It is TRIUMPHANTLY POWERFUL. "Lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together, they saw it, and so they marvelled, they were troubled and hasted away. Fear took hold upon them there." Godly men are the true conquerors of the world; they conquer though they fall. The enemies they crush are, not existences, but the moral evils that curse existence; they wrestle, not against flesh and blood, but against the "principalities and powers of darkness, against wickedness in high places." Injustice, ignorance, oppression, superstition, these are the foes of humanity; and who conquers them but the good citizens of the spiritual Jerusalem? They flee be-

fore them as darkness before the light; as a fleet of Tarshish vessels in the tempest, they are dashed to pieces and engulfed. The godly become more than conquerors; they not only overcome their enemies but gain strength by the conquest.

V. It is RELIGIOUSLY MEDITATIVE. "We have thought of Thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of Thy temple." Observe—

First: The *subject* of the contemplation. (1) The "lovingkindness" of God. What a sublime theme is this! God's lovingkindness is the inspiration of His being, the root of the universe, and the fountain of all happiness. (2) His righteous power. "Thy right hand is full of righteousness." His right hand is His omnipotence, and His omnipotence is fraught with righteousness. Observe—

Secondly: The *scene* of the thought. The temple. "In the midst of Thy temple." It is in the temple, the scene of worship, these thoughts come up to the mind. The community of the godly is a thoughtful company. They think of the grandest subject in the most sacred scenes. They make His "lovingkindness," His "name," His "righteousness," the theme of their meditation, and His universe the temple of their existence.

VI. It is SOCIALLY COMMANDING. "Walk about Zion and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces that ye may tell it to the generation following." This godly community have an urgent claim to the earnest attention of mankind; they deserve and will repay the study of all; no study is so urgent, so important, so useful as the study of the true Church of God. These men will learn the sublimest subjects of thought, the most urgent duties and momentous interests. The true Church is the best Bible, the fullest and the most real revelation of God. "Mark ye well her bulwarks and her palaces." See where true protection and royal dignities are found.

VII. It is INFINITELY AFFLUENT. "This God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death." God

is their property. What are worlds, systems, the universe, to God ?

First : He is the only *soul-satisfying* property. The soul is so constituted that it can be satisfied with nothing less than God ; it does not want His, but Him ; it cries out for the living God. Give it the universe, and it will be empty and hungry without Him.

Secondly : He is the only *enduring* property. Everything else shall pass away. The heavens and the earth shall pass away, but He remains, and to His years there is no end. This is the property of this godly community ; they may have but little, if any, of this world's goods ; they may be paupers ; but they all have God ; they can say, "The Lord is my portion for ever and ever."

CONCLUSION :—Such are some of the facts which this psalm suggests and illustrates concerning this godly community, this true Church, this moral Jerusalem. Do we belong to this city, this spiritual commonwealth, this blessed communion ? If so, it matters not what conventional Church owns or disowns us, it matters but little what our temporal circumstances are, or how we stand with the world. "We have our citizenship in heaven, whence also we look for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." And where is heaven ? Here and everywhere.

"In Thee my powers, my treasures live,
To Thee my life must tend ;
Giving Thyself, Thou all dost give,
O soul-sufficing Friend !

"And wherefore should I seek above
The city in the sky ?
Since firm in faith and deep in love
Its broad foundations lie—

"Since in a life of peace and prayer,
Nor known on earth nor praised,
By humblest toil, by ceaseless care,
Its holy towers are raised.

"Where pain the soul hath purified,
And penitence hath striven,
And truth is crowned and glorified—
There, only there, is heaven ! "

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Job.

The Book of Job is one of the grandest sections of Divine Scripture. It has never yet, to our knowledge, been treated in a purely Homiletic method for Homiletic ends. Besides many learned expositions on the book found in our general commentaries, we have special exegetical volumes of good scholarship and critical worth; such as Drs. Barnes, Werners, Mason Goode, Noyes Lee, Delitzsch, and Herman Hadwisk Bernard; the last is in every way a masterly production. For us, therefore, to go into philology and verbal criticism, when such admirable works are available to all students, would be superfluous, if not presumption. Ambiguous terms, when they occur, we shall of course explain, and occasionally suggest an improved rendering; but our work will be chiefly, if not entirely, Homiletic. We shall essay to bring out from the grand old words those Divine verities which are true and vital to men as men in all lands and ages. These truths we shall frame in an order as philosophic and suggestive as our best powers will enable us to do; and this in order to help the earnest preachers of God's Holy Word.

Subject: The Strugglings of a Suffering Soul after God.

"Then Job answered and said," etc.—Job xliii. 1–10.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS: Ver. 1, 2.—"*Then Job answered and said, Even to-day is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning.*" Eliphaz has done—he retires from the scene, he speaks no more to Job; and the patriarch now replies to him in this and the following chapters. He begins by declaring that his afflictions were unabated, and though his groanings might appear loud and long they did not fully express his agony.

Ver. 3.—"*Oh that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His seat!*" Often had he expressed a desire to bring his cause directly under the notice of the Almighty. See chap. xiii. 8–20. But he had failed to do it. Finding that all discussion with his three friends was useless, he seems to feel more intently anxious than ever to appeal to Heaven.

Ver. 4.—"*I would order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments.*" I would lay my case fully before Him; I would declare all that I thought and felt; I would unbosom to Him all my heart; I would endeavour to show to Him that I am wrongly accused, that I am true in heart and ought not to suffer as I do.

Ver. 5.—"*I would know the words which He would answer me, and understand what He would say unto me.*" I do not know His decision concerning me; I am anxious to know His judgment about me. The estimate of others is of little worth; His is everything, I want to know it.

Ver. 6.—"*Will He plead against me with His great power? No; but He would put strength in me.*" Would He contend with me with the

greatness of His power, and overwhelm me with His almightiness? No: He would give me strength; or, as Dr. Bernard translates it,—"He would give heed unto me," meaning, He would succour me. Or, in the language of Delitzsch, "He would only regard me."

Ver. 7.—"*There the righteous might dispute with Him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge.*" The upright might argue with Him. I am upright, of this I am conscious; and if I had such an opportunity I should deliver myself from my judge, that is, from the man or men who unrighteously condemn me.

Ver. 8, 9. "*Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him: on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him: He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him.*" "Yet I go eastward, but He is not there; and westward, but I perceive Him not; northwards, where He worketh, but I behold Him not. He turneth aside southwards, and I see Him not."—*Delitzsch*. The meaning is, I look in all directions for God, and I cannot find Him. I look to the east, where the sun rises in all its glory, and He is not there; I turn westward, where the horizon in the evening is made golden and gorgeous with the beams of the sinking sun, but He is not there; I turn to the north, where the Aurora Borealis lights up the heavens, He is not there; I turn to the dark mysterious south, but I cannot trace Him there. All my efforts are fruitless.

Ver. 10.—"*But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.*" "Surely had He but known the way, which was mine, had He but tried me, I should have come forth as gold."—*Bernard*. Our version is better than this, it seems more faithful to the original, and conveys a better idea.

HOMILETICS.—Here we have revealed to us the strugglings of a suffering soul after God. Such struggles are not uncommon. One of the deepest cries of the race is, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him."

I. Here we have revealed an INTENSE DESIRE TO COMMUNE with God. The patriarch indicates several reasons why he desires to commune with God.

First: In order to *speak to Him*. The highest development of man's social nature is speaking to God. The act implies a settled practical faith in the personality, the nearness, and the accessibility of the Divine Existence. Good men speak to their fellow-creatures, but speak oftener, fuller, and more habitually to God. Their souls open to Him as flowers to the sun. In speaking to Him they get the highest spiritual quickening and stimulus, and experience the sublimest social gratifi-

cation. "I would fill my mouth with arguments." Abraham said, "I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord."

Secondly: In order to *learn of Him*, ' would know the words which He would answer me, and understand what He would say unto me." The soul has a natural craving for communications from the great Father. Utterances of men abound, they din the ear, they crowd our libraries; but the soul craves for something higher, hungers after thoughts from God—thoughts pure, living, strengthening, ennobling, and satisfying.

Thirdly: In order to *get strength from Him*. "Will He plead against me with His great power? No; but He would put strength in me." With His might He could annihilate me in one instant; but this He will not do. He will strengthen me, for strength I want—strength of body and of mind, strength of intellect and heart, strength to suffer with magnanimity, to work with heroism, to serve mankind successfully and to worship the Infinite with acceptance. God will strengthen us, He will perfect strength in our weakness.

Fourthly: In order to *be delivered by Him*. "So should I be delivered for ever from my judge." Men judge their fellow-creatures uncharitably, unrighteously, severely. Their judgments sometimes fall with crushing weight upon their victims, even where there is no law to enforce them. Job felt this, it was one of his greatest trials; and he felt, if he could only speak to God, He would deliver him from the condemnation of men.

What good reason this old patriarch had for desiring communion with God! What confidence in his own uprightness and the tender mercy of his Maker, are revealed in the objects which he expected to gain by the communion! All these sublime objects are within our reach. We by communion with God can yet speak to God, learn of Him, get strength from Him, and be delivered by Him.

II. Here we have revealed FRUITLESS ENDEAVOURS TO MEET with God. "Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him: on the left hand, where

He doth work, but I cannot behold Him: he hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him." He sought God in all directions, but he failed to find Him. Why did he fail? The following reasons may be suggested:—

First: Because he sought for *outward* manifestations of Him, rather than *inward*. He looked outside himself for the Deity. He looked to the east, the west, the north, the south; but it does not appear that he looked into his own spiritual nature, where God must be seen, if seen at all. Unless a man sees God in the moral intuitions of his nature and the affections of his heart, he will never see Him, either in the heavens above or the earth beneath. He who sees God within him, will see God everywhere outside of him.

Secondly: Because he sought for *extraordinary* manifestations of Him, rather than *regular*. God was in the north, the west, the south, the east, in every part of nature, marching on in stately majesty, working out His grand purposes in the regular operations of nature; and yet, because he looked for some striking phenomenon, he perceived Him not. In this respect the patriarch was like the sceptics in every age. Because God in nature proceeds in a path from which He never seems to swerve, they do not recognise Him, and often even deny His existence. "Since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they did at the beginning," is their cry. If He exists, why does He not break the monotony of the universe, write His name on the broad heavens for men of every land to read? etc., etc.

Thirdly: Because he sought Him with the *intellect* rather than with the *heart*. Man can never with the intellectual eye see the Infinite; it is only with the heart. God is seen through faith—the faith of the heart, not through philosophy. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He will reward all those that diligently seek Him." When Jacob's heart was touched with sympathy for the Almighty, then he saw Him, and not until then. "Surely God is in this place, and I knew it not." God had always been there, but he had not the heart-eye with which to see Him.

"Oh, tell me, mighty Wind, where art Thou,
Shall I dive into the deep,
Call to the sun, or ask the roaring sea
For the Creator?
Shall I question loud the thunder
If in that the Almighty dwells?
Or holds He furious storms
In straitened reins,
And bids fierce whirlwinds wheel His rapid car?
What mean these questions?
Trembling, I retract.
My prostrate soul adores the present God."—*Dr. Young.*

III. Here we have revealed a CONSCIOUSNESS THAT HE WAS KNOWN OF GOD. "He knoweth the way that I take," "When He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold."* It would appear from this that Job had a threefold assurance concerning God.

First: That God was *fully cognizant of his individual trials*. "He knoweth the way that I take." Although I know Him not, He knows me; although I cannot see Him, I am under His eye; wherever I am, at home or abroad, He sees me. "He knoweth the way that I take,"—the way my thoughts take, my feelings take, my purposes take, my actions take.

Secondly: That God was *mercifully using His trials as disciplines*. "When He hath tried me." He sends afflictions, not for His own gratification, but for the sufferer's benefit; He doth not willingly afflict the children of men. He sends afflictions to humble us, to make us feel our dependence upon Him, and to make us commit ourselves entirely to His keeping.

Thirdly: That God *would turn the painful discipline to his benefit*. "I shall come forth as gold." The Bible is full of this doctrine. "Tribulation worketh patience," etc. How does affliction benefit? It serves (1) to develop the powers of the mind, (2) to quicken the spiritual life, (3) to impress with the sense of personal responsibility, (4) to detach us from the world. It gradually breaks down the materialism in which the soul is caged, and lets it free into the open air and light of the spiritual domains where God is seen and enjoyed.

* See a Homily on this text, *Homilist*, Series III., vol. i., p. 388.

Sermonic Glances at the Gospel of St. John.

As our purpose in the treatment of this Gospel is purely the development, in the briefest and most suggestive form, of Sermonic outlines, we must refer our readers to the following works for all critical inquiries into the author and authorship of the book, and also for any minute criticisms on difficult clauses. The works we shall especially consult are:—"Introduction to New Testament," by Bleek; "Commentary on John," by Tholuck; "Commentary on John," by Hengstenberg; "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels," by Westcott; "The Gospel History," by Ebrard; "Our Lord's Divinity," by Liddon; "St. John's Gospel," by Oesterzee; "Doctrine of the Person of Christ," by Dorner; Lange; etc., etc.

Subject: Christ's first two Discourses at the Feast of Tabernacles.

"Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him. And some of them would have taken Him; but no man laid hands on Him. Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought Him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed. Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. And every man went unto his own house."—John vii. 40-53.

EXPOSITION: Ver. 40.—"*Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet.*" There was an expectation amongst some of the Jews that one of the old prophets would appear and precede the Messiah. Many of them thought that Jesus was one. They felt certain of this. "*Of a truth.*"

Ver. 41.—“*Others said, This is the Christ.*” “Some of the Jews held that the prophet who was to come was different from the Messiah, and was to herald His coming. Others held that He was the same with Christ. Here they seem to be distinguished. Some took Jesus for the prophet, and others for the Christ Himself. See ch. i. 20. ‘*But some said.*’ These objectors were always ready, ever stiffing by the Scripture itself the yearnings of faith. A true sample this of the world’s wisdom in things spiritual. Knowing so much, and yet knowing so little—ready enough to bring forward difficulties and pick flaws, but not at all ready with the proper explanations, even when they are plain to a child.”—*Jacobus*. “*Shall Christ come out of Galilee?*” Those who put this question insinuated falsehood or a desire to pervert facts. Christ did not come out of Galilee in the sense of being born there. He was born in Bethlehem. He was brought up, it is true, in Nazareth in Galilee, but not born there.

Ver. 42.—“*Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?*” (Isaiah xi. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5; Micah v. 2). “Where David was” (1 Sam. xvi.).

Ver. 43.—“*So there was a division among the people (ἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ) because of Him.*” “This division, or violent split, among those who accorded recognition to the Lord in different degrees, must be distinguished from the division between all those who are friendly to Him and the enemies of whom (ver. 44) he goes on at once to speak, or the analogous divisions in ch. ix. 6 and x. 18. There were at first but a few among the people who made common cause with the hostile Pharisees.”—*Lange*.

Ver. 44.—“*And some of them would have taken Him.*” “Some.” Who? Not any of the two preceding classes; but the people who heard His words and were exasperated. “*No man laid hands on Him.*” Why not? What held them back? Conscience, and the restraining force of justice.

Ver. 45.—“*Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees.*” These officers are the same in all probability as those spoken of in verse 82, who were sent by the Sanhedrim to take Him. They had been on the watch for some hours during this public excitement. Why did they pause so long? This is the question the chief priests and Pharisees asked them. “*Why have ye not brought Him?*” Why? They could not, for the causes that prevented some of the people from taking Him.

Ver. 46.—“*The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.*” This was their answer, and explains the reason why they had not brought Him, viz., the impression they had received of His transcendent excellence as a Teacher. There was a grandeur, an independency, a purity, a power, and a catholicity in His words that impressed them with the surpassing greatness of the Teacher.

Ver. 47.—“*Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?*”

Is it possible that you, our servants, our officers, are cheated by this Impostor?

Ver. 48.—“*Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?*”

This means, Since none of the rulers or the Pharisees believed on Him, how monstrous it is that such men as you, ignorant hirelings, should yield the smallest pretension to His claims.

Ver. 49.—“*But this people.*” The language is contemptuous, this ignorant rabble, “*Who knoweth not the law are cursed.*” They are utterly ignorant of all law, are cursed, that is, We, who are the religious law-givers, have cursed them.

Ver. 50.—“*Nicodemus saith unto them.*” He was a member of the Sanhedrim. “*He that came to Jesus by night being one of them.*” We have an account of his appearing to Christ in the third chapter. This timid and cowardly disciple, instead of thundering condemnation in their ears, puts a question.

Ver. 51.—“*Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?*” As if he had said, You talk about law, but where is the law in your conduct? Law requires an honest trial, before even a criminal is condemned (Exod. xxiii. 1; Deut. i. 16, 17; xix. 15).

Ver. 52.—“*They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee?*” This fierce rejoinder of the Pharisees strikingly and solemnly contrasts with the very feeble defence which Nicodemus had put forth. It expresses utter scorn for the man who in any way sympathized with Jesus. “*Search and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.*” Here they showed their ignorance; for was not Jonah a prophet, and Elijah a prophet, and came they not out of Galilee? Besides, Christ did not come out of Galilee in the sense of being born there, He came out of Bethlehem.

Ver. 53.—“*And every man went unto his own house.*” Finding their malignant attempts so far unsuccessful, the members of the Sanhedrim went to their own houses.

HOMEILETICS.—The incidents recorded in the verses before us present certain facts connected with *Christ's discourses at the feast of tabernacles* additional to those which have already been noticed. These facts indeed are generally developed through the teaching of Christ in every age and land. And in relation to His teaching it appears,—

I. That it produced a VAST VARIETY OF OPINIONS CONCERNING HIM. “Many of the people,” etc. Some of His hearers on this occasion said He was a prophet; some, that He was the Christ; whilst many denied that He was either, and were ready to wreak vengeance on Him as an impostor. So there was a division, a schism amongst them. Diversity of

opinion amongst the hearers of Christ is shown on another occasion. "Jesus said, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that Thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets" (Matt. xvi. 13, 14). The variety of speculative opinion which Christ's teaching has always produced, reveals,—

First: The *great diversity* in the *minds* of men. No two minds are exactly alike in the kind or measure of faculty and tendency, nor have any two minds passed through exactly the same educational process; hence it is almost impossible for any two minds to form exactly the same opinions concerning any person or proposition. This variety gives a freshness to the great field of human thought, and it should teach man to treat the conclusions of his brother with respect, however much they may differ from his own. It should also warn those ecclesiastics and rulers who presume to govern the opinions of men of their folly and their wickedness.

Secondly: The *moral perversity* in the *souls* of men. Wrong opinions in all cases on moral subjects indicate a perversion of judgment. The broad eternal principles of moral virtue are so self-obvious and radiant, that wrong conclusions concerning them are inexcusable in the case of all to whom they are presented. Christ's life was at once the incarnation and brightest revelation of those principles; and hence diversity of opinion in relation to His character implies perversity of heart. Were all men, whatever their diversity of mind, to give to Him a proper study, they would say, "Master, we know that Thou art true."

Thirdly: The *intellectual freedom* which Christ allows men. Mighty as He is in power, far reaching as His influence is in the depths of the human soul, and potent as are His truths, He does not coerce thought, does not compel men to believe, He leaves them free. "Will ye also go away?"

In relation to His teaching, it appears,—

II. That it produced a PROFOUND IMPRESSION AS TO HIS TRANSCENDENT WORTH. "Never man spake like this man."

This was the utterance of the rough Roman officers who were sent forth by their masters to seize Him; and it is the language that impartial minds in all times and lands must adopt; there never was such a teacher. "Never man spake like this man." So original, so independent, so suggestive, so natural, so tender, so faithful, so devout, so soul-commanding. As a Teacher, in all these respects He throws the greatest sages of antiquity in the shade, and makes modern scientists dwindle into insignificance.

"Never man spake like this man." Such is the opinion of the greatest men,—legislators, philosophers, and poets,—of the world. He stands alone. The thoughts of the greatest thinkers of all times are, as compared to His, only as the frail productions of human art compared to the magnificent organizations of living nature. "The whole world," says a modern author, "has confirmed this sentence. Believers have felt its truth, as they have imbibed the instructions of their heavenly Master; and infidels have not been able to suppress their admiration at the Sermon on the Mount, the Golden Rule, the parables of the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, and the prayer of Jesus with His disciples before His death. May it not be found at last that He lifted up in vain His voice of sweet persuasion and awful warning, to plead with our negligent and hardened hearts, and to win us to God and heaven; but, hearing, may we understand; and understanding, feel; and feeling, practise the precepts of life and immortality."

In relation to His teaching, it appears,—

III. That it produced A DEADLY HOSTILITY TOWARDS HIM. "Some of them would have taken Him," etc. In the hostility which the teaching of Christ roused in the minds of these Chief Priests and Pharisees we discover several evils.

First: *Intolerance*. Exasperated by the doctrines He proclaimed and the influence He was exerting upon the people, they wickedly resolved to crush Him. "Some of them would have taken Him." Deep and strong was the desire they had [to arrest His progress, cripple His energies, and even destroy His very existence. Antagonism to Christianity

is ever associated with intolerance; it denounces argument and betakes itself to violence. Another evil we discover, is,—

Secondly: *Superciliousness*. "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?" The spirit of this language is: What is the worth of your opinions compared with ours—the rulers of the people? They are beneath contempt. With what haughtiness the enemies of Christianity have always treated its disciples! They have branded them as fools and fanatics; they deem themselves the wise, forsooth! Another evil we discover is,—

Thirdly: *Insolence*. "But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed." "This people," meaning this rabble, this ignorant mob. The enemies of Christianity have always treated its adherents as the "offscouring of all things." Another evil we discover is,—

Fourthly: *Ridicule*. "Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." These words were addressed to Nicodemus, whose mean spirit their hostility had stirred up to a little courage, sufficient to say in their presence, "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him and knoweth what he doeth?" But little respect have I for such discipleship as that of Nicodemus. He was too mean-spirited and craven. "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him?" Why ask such a question? O Nicodemus, why didst thou not say, "Our law condemns your conduct? You are perpetrating the greatest moral enormity in treating with heartless indignity the Holy Son of God! Woe to you!" So far as he was concerned, their reply served him right. "Art thou also of Galilee?" Art thou one of the despicable Galileans? Ridicule has often been one of the ready instruments of the opponents of Christianity. Another evil we discover is,—

Fifthly: *Humiliation*. "Every man went unto his own house." So far the malignant plans of the chief priests and Pharisees were baffled, and they retired home no doubt with spirits chagrined and humbled. Such will be the condition of all the opponents to Christianity sooner or later.

Such are some of the evils connected with the hostility which

the teaching of Christ awakened in the minds of those old bigoted leaders of the Jewish people.

CONCLUSION.—How stand we in relation to Christ? Are our minds merely taken up with speculative opinions concerning Him, or are our hearts centered in Him by a living faith? True faith is something independent of what are called "the evidences." It comes by a soul recognition of Christ in the glory of His person and the adaptation of His teaching to the intellect, conscience, and deep-felt needs of the heart.

"A man of subtle reasoning asked
A peasant if he knew
Where was the internal evidence
That proved his Bible true.
The terms of disputative art
Had never reached his ear;
He laid his hand upon his heart,
And only answered "Here!"

Germes of Thought.

Subject: An Old Portrait of Modern Men.

"Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit. The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh. Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit. Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun. There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother; yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail."—EccLES. iv. 4-8.

WHAT hath been is now. This is true of human character. The same varieties in human character are found in all times and lands. Here is a portrait, drawn by a man who lived thousands of years ago, of three distinct types

of character that you find everywhere about you here and now.

I. Here is a man WORKING FOR THE GOOD of society. "Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour." Solomon, no doubt, was well acquainted with society in his own age and land. He observed, he read, he studied the men of his times. Amongst others which he saw around him, were men who were doing "every right work"—men who were laying themselves out for the good of the State, for the good of the race—true patriots and philanthropists—men who sought not their own individual interests, but the good of the commonwealth. Thank God! there have ever been such men—generous, disinterested, broad-hearted, God-inspired men—men who are doing the "right work." These men are the pillars of the social temple; remove them, and all is ruin. They are the "salt" of the State; remove them, and all is putrescence. How are these men treated by society? Here is the answer. "For this a man is envied of his neighbour." Though the distinction they have gained in society is not that of bloody conquest or successful money-making, but of pure usefulness, still they are envied. It has ever been so. Cain envied Abel; Korah envied Moses, Saul envied David, the Sanhedrim envied Christ, the Judaic teachers envied Paul. This is indeed, as Solomon says, "vanity and vexation of spirit." To see society envying such men is a sore "vexation" to all true hearts. What do the existence and treatment of these men show?

First: *The great kindness of heaven in sending such men into every age.* What would become of an age without such men in it? The ignorant would have no schools, the afflicted no hospitals, the indigent no poor-laws and charities, the people no righteous laws and no temples for worship. The greatest gift of heaven to an age, is a true and useful man.

Secondly: *The rightful acknowledgments of most useful services are not to be expected on earth.* The world readily offers its acknowledgments to worthless royalties, to men of plunder and of blood. But the really useful man, the man

who works with retiring modesty, day after day, for the highest good of mankind,—there is no reward for such men here. How did the world treat Moses, Jeremiah, the Apostles, and the Holy Christ? Yonder, not here, is the reward for truly right labour.

Thirdly: *The moral state of society is both unwise and unrighteous.* How unwise to treat men who do the "right work" amongst them with envy! For its own good it should cheer them on in their philanthropic efforts. How unrighteous too! These men have a claim to its gratitude, sympathy, and co-operation.

II. Here is a man UTTERLY WORTHLESS in society. "The fool foldeth his hands together and eateth his own flesh." Solomon saw indolent men around him, that is, men "folding their hands" in idleness and self-indulgence, and "eating their own flesh;" that is, preying upon their own comforts, wasting their own means. He intimates that such a character is a fool; he calls him a "fool." And two reasons are suggested why he calls him a "fool."

First: He *exhausts his own property.* "Eateth his own flesh." To live, he must consume; and consuming decreases resources. He produces nothing, he lives on his capital, and eats it away. The indolent man is a "fool" in this respect, although his material resources, by profitable investments, may, independent of himself, increase a hundred-fold. He loses growth of intellect, vigour of purpose, freshness of soul. The indolent man evermore eats his own flesh; that is, exhausts his own personal strength, mental, moral, physical, for the want of proper exertion.

Secondly: He *wrongly estimates his own happiness.* "Better is an handful with quietness than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit." In one sense this is true—in the sense in which it is stated elsewhere, "Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith." But this is not the sense in which the lazy man regards it. By quietness he meant quiescence, non-exertion, lounging, folding the hands, and sleeping life away. Now this

character abounds in our age and land. You see them hanging about public houses, gin-palaces, sauntering through the streets and the parks, lounging in clubs and divans, lolling in chariots in the fashionable "drives." These characters are not only a curse to themselves, dying with *ennui*, but a curse to society; they are clogs upon the wheel of industry; they are social thieves; they eat what others have produced.

III. Here is a man AVARICIOUSLY MAKING USE of society. "There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good?" Solomon, having sketched a practical philanthropist and an indolent loungeur, now drafts the outline of one of those miserable men to be found everywhere—greedy, covetous, turning everything to his own personal account.

First: The man he sketches worked *entirely* for himself. "There is one alone and there is not a second, yea he hath neither child nor brother." It would seem that this particular man had no relatives depending on him; and if he had, he would not have cared for them. Self was everything. Self-gratification, self-aggrandizement, self the centre and circumference of all his activities.

Secondly: The man he sketches worked *unremittingly* for himself. "Yet is there no end of all his labour." Always at it—morning, noon, and night; it was the one thing he did.

Thirdly: The man he sketches worked *insatiably* for himself. "Neither is his eye satisfied with riches." The more he had, the more he wanted; his hunger was unappeased and unappeasable. The passion of avarice has been called the great sepulchre of all the passions. Unlike other tombs, however, it is enlarged by repletion and strengthened by age. An old writer has said, an avaricious man is like Tantalus, up to the chin in water, yet always thirsty. Of what thousands and millions of men in this age and land is this man not a type! Avarice seems to me to be the ruling passion of the age.

CONCLUSION.—Let us persevere with the "right work."

Heed not the envy of society. Seek to rouse the indolent and self-indulgent, and preach in thunder to the avaricious, that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things that he hath.

The Preacher's Finger-Post.

*Subject: A SWEET BEGINNING,
BUT A BITTER END.*

"Knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end?"
—2 SAM. ii. 26.

These are the words of Abner, a near relation of king Saul, and a distinguished general of his armies. They are addressed to Joab, one of David's nephews and a commander of his army, a man valiant it is true but bounding with ambition and burning with vengeance. The history of both these men is very interesting and suggestive; though brief, it is too long to detail here. Detaching the words from the times, seasons, and circumstances in which they were uttered, we take them to illustrate the solemn and universal truth, that a *course of wrong conduct ends in bitterness*. This is so patent and obvious to all, that it needs neither argument nor illustration to establish it, and from it we may infer the following truths:—

I. THAT SIN DOES NOT ANSWER IN THE LONG RUN.

A course of sin may and often does answer for a certain time; it may yield profit and pleasure to its author for years. *Unrighteous avarice* may answer for a certain time. The greedy and over-reaching man of the world may be wondrously successful. He may see his fortune rising higher and glittering brighter as the result of his unscrupulous and unremitting efforts. In all this he may for a time find great pleasure. Success keeps his brain active and his blood warm. *Unbridled sensuality* may answer for a certain time. A young man gives himself up to the gratification of his animal appetites and lusts. Whatever will charm his eye with beauty or his ears with sound, whatever will titillate the sensibilities of his lower nature, he pursues; and in all he has pleasure for a time. He finds an elysium in purely sensual indulgences. *Unscrupulous ambition* may answer for a certain time. In all men there is more or less a love of power;

in some it is a dominant passion, they would rather reign in hell than serve in heaven. These men, working out their passion, struggle upward in the social realm; they rise from one elevation to another; and in each rise, as well as in the process, they have a certain enjoyment; their course yields them pleasure. *Social impositions* may answer for a certain time. There are men who have a passion for deceiving, they live for imposture, and by imposture. The medical quack, the arrogant priest, the political demagogue, the pulpit charlatan, these all impose upon the people, and their imposition leads often to great popularity and great gain. Now, whilst in all these courses of conduct there is a certain amount of a certain kind of pleasure, the pleasure only runs on to a certain period. From an inevitable law in the moral universe, the time comes when the sweet becomes bitter, when all the pleasure becomes poison that rankles in every vein of the soul. We infer,—

II. That WE DO NOT FINISH WITH LIFE AS WE GO ON. The brute perhaps finishes his life as he proceeds; his yesterdays affect him only materially. Not so with man. We have not done with any of the *conscious* periods through which we have passed, not even with the earliest. Our first actions

will vibrate on the ear a thousand ages on; the first scenes will unfold themselves to the eye in ages far on in the future. Two laws render this certain:—

First: The law of *Moral Causation*. Our consciousness is ourselves; and this consciousness is the product of the past, it is to-day the result of what it was yesterday, it was yesterday the result of the previous day, and so back to its first dawn. It is to-day the cause of what it will be to-morrow. Morally indeed we are to-day the production of our past and the parent of our future.

Secondly: The law of *Mental Association*. There is a faculty within us we call memory, and this memory gathers up the fragments of our past life so that nothing is lost. How often, by the principle of contrast, resemblance, and proximity, are the past actions of our lives called vividly up before us!

“And slight withal may be the things which bring
Back on the heart the weight
which it would fling
Aside for ever. It may be a sound,
A tone of music, summer's eve,
a spring,
A flower, the wind, the ocean,
which shall wound,
Striking the electric chain where-
with we are darkly bound.”

Byron.

Memory is the curse of the wicked, the paradise of the innocent, and the common resort of all souls. We infer,—

III. That a SINNER'S MORAL SENSE IS DESTINED TO A GREAT REVOLUTION. What was sweet once, becomes bitter in the future. Physically, the man who at one time felt an article of food as delicious which afterwards he felt to be nauseous, has had, of course, his natural palate greatly altered. Just so in morals; when a man finds that the things which at one time gave him highest delight yield him intense pain, some great change must have taken place in his moral sensibility. Ah, it is so. The time hastens when he will see with different eyes, hear with different ears, feel with different nerves, taste with different palate. What was once beautiful, becomes hideous; what was once harmonious, becomes discordant; what was once delicious, becomes as bitter as gall. The silver which Judas clutches with delight, through a change in his moral sensibility, becomes so red-hot that he throws it away as unbearable. The warm sea in which the voluptuary luxuriated will by a change of moral sensibility be turned into a lake of fire. The fact is, that all the pleasures connected with sinful life are dependent upon a torpidity of conscience; let the conscience be aroused to a sense of its guilty condition, and these pleasures vanish, nay, turn into wormwood and gall.

CONCLUSION.—The moral of the whole is, Live honestly, truthfully, virtuously, Christly, every day of your life, that your pleasures every day may remain pleasures for ever.

Subject: THE RELIGION OF CHRIST.

"And He said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how."—MARK IV. 26, 27.

This short and significant parable is found only in Mark. All the parables in this Gospel but this are recorded by the other three Evangelists. How Mark obtained it we know not. We shall use it to illustrate the religion of Christ. The question, What is religion? has been asked many times, and has received answers various and often conflicting. In the light of the parable we infer the following things concerning it:

I. That the religion of Christ is a REIGN. It is here spoken of as a "kingdom." Men often think and speak of religion as if it were a creed, or a sentiment, or a ritualism. It is not so: it is a *reign*, a regal force. It is a power that holds dominion over a man's intellect, heart, will, intelligence. Unless it is thus *imperial*, it is nothing. As a reign it is (1) Spiritual. Its throne is within. "The

kingdom of God" is within you. (2) Free. It not only allows but guarantees the perfect freedom of the soul. (3) Constant. It is not something supreme to-day and subordinate to-morrow; it is always dominant, it is a "kingdom that cannot be moved." We infer,—

II. That the religion of Christ is a DIVINE reign. "Kingdom of God." So deep and influential is the religious element in man, that many religions that are not Divine assume a reigning power. The religion of Confucius, Buddha, Mahomet, obtain a regal force. But the religion of Christ is a Divine reign in the soul.

First: Its *congruity* with human nature proves its Divinity. It accords with reason, conscience, and the profoundest cravings of the soul. It fits into the soul as nothing else ever has or ever can.

Secondly: Its *influence* on human life proves its Divinity. It makes men righteous, loving, peaceful, God-like. Christ's religion is a Divine reign.

III. We infer that the religion of Christ is a GROWING reign. It comes into the mind as if "a man should cast seed into the ground." It not only grows in the individual soul, but grows in the increase of its subjects. Three things are suggested about its growth,—

First: It is *silent*. It advances as the seed advances, noiselessly and unheard. It does not advance as the reign of human monarchs, by noise and bluster, by social convulsion and bloody wars. It works in the mind and spreads through society silent as the distilling dew, silent as the morning beam.

Secondly: It is *gradual*. The seed does not bound at once into the perfect plant or tree; quietly from stage to stage it moves on. The Supreme seems to do all His work in nature gradually. How gradually the earth became fitted for the habitation of man, geology has shown. The Eternal One is in no hurry.

Thirdly: It is *secret*. "The seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how." No man of science has ever yet been able to explain how it is that out of an acorn a forest comes. Nor can any man fully explain how the religion of Christ enters men and gains an ascendancy over their natures. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

IV. That the religion of Christ is a HUMANLY PROMOTABLE reign.

First: *Human effort* is implied in this parable. Man

sasts the seed into the ground. Whilst man cannot in nature create the crop, no crop would come without his agency; so Christ has left the extension of His religion to depend in some measure on man. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel," etc.

Secondly: Human effort *founded on confidence in Divine laws* is implied in this parable. The man in the parable is represented, after having committed the seed into the ground, as being free from anxiety. He goes to "sleep" at night, he rises "night and day;" thus goes on his ordinary course of life, trusting to the ordinances of nature to reward his efforts. Thus it must be with the men who

would extend the religion of Christ. They must work, but work in confidence. They must plant, they must water, but trust to God to give the increase.

CONCLUSION: Such is the religion of Christ. Study it, creedists, sentimentalists, ritualists, letterists, sacerdotal ecclesiastics, and cease to misrepresent to the world the religion of Him whom you call Master. It is a life and a growth.

"The oak-tree's boughs once touched the grass;

But every year they grew
A little farther from the ground,
And nearer toward the blue.

So live that you each day may be,
While time glides softly by,
A little farther from the earth,
And nearer to the sky."

LIFE.—Many men spend their lives in gazing at their own shadows, and so dwindle away into shadows thereof. And one of his companion guessers at truth, remarks, that instead of watching the bird as it flies above our heads, we chase his shadow along the ground; and, finding we cannot grasp it, we conclude it to be nothing.—*Archdeacon Hare.*

SUCCESS.—"What is the great use of succeeding? Failing? Where is the great harm? Paha! These things appear as nought, when time passes—Time the consoler—Time the anodyne—Time the grey, calm satirist, whose sad smile seems to say, Look, O man, at the vanity of the objects you pursue, and of yourself who pursue them!"—*Thackeray.*

"Dust are our frames, and gilded dust our pride,
Looks only for a moment whole and sound,
Like that long-buried body of the king
Found lying with his urns and ornaments,
Which, at a touch of light or air of heaven,
Slipt into ashes and was found no more."

Seeds of Sermons from the Minor Prophets.

If the Bible as a whole is inspired, it is of vast importance that all its Divine ideas should be brought to bear upon the living world of men. Though the pulpit is the organ Divinely intended for this work, it has been doing it hitherto in a miserably partial and restricted method. It selects isolated passages, and leaves whole chapters and books for the most part untouched. Its conduct to the Minor Prophets may be taken as a case in point. How seldom are they resorted to for texts! and yet they abound with splendid passages throbbing with Divine ideas. It is our purpose to go through this section of the Holy Word; selecting, however, only such verses in each chapter and book as seem the most suggestive of truths of the most vital interest and universal application.

Having passed rapidly through Hosea and Joel, two of the Minor Prophets, we come now to Amos. He, we are informed, was a native of Tekoa, a small region in the tribe of Judah, about twelve miles south-east of Jerusalem. Nothing is known of his parents. He evidently belonged to the humbler class of life, and pursued the occupation of the humble shepherd. From his flock he was divinely called to the high office of prophet; and though himself of the tribe of Judah, his mission was to Israel. He was sent to Bethel, into the kingdom of the ten tribes. He commenced his ministry in the reign of Uzziah, between 810 and 783 a.c., and therefore laboured about the same time as Hosea. In his time idolatry, with its concomitant evils and immoralities of every description, reigned with uncontrolled sway amongst the Israelites, and against these evils he hurled his denunciations. The book has been divided into three parts: "First, sentences pronounced against the Syrians, the Philistines, the Phœnicians, the Edomites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Jews, and the Israelites, chapters i. and ii. Second, special discourses delivered against Israel, chapters iii. to vi. Third, visions, partly of a consolatory and partly of a comminatory nature, in which reference is had both to the times that were to pass over the ten tribes previous to the coming of the Messiah, and to what was to take place under His reign, chapters vii. to ix. His style is marked by perspicuity, elegance, energy, and fulness. His images are mostly original, and taken from the natural scenery with which he was familiar.

No. CIV.

Subject: RELIGIOUS SINCERITY.

"They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy god, O Dan, liveth; and, The manner of Beer-sheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again."—Amos viii. 14.

"The sin of Samaria," means the idolatry of Samaria. In Samaria they worshipped the golden calf as the chief object; but it would seem there were other inferior idols. The god of Dan was the golden calf set up by Jeroboam in Dan (1 Kings xii.). "The fulfilment," says Delitzsch, "of these threats commenced with the destruction of the kingdom of Israel

and the carrying away of the ten tribes into exile in Assyria, and continues to this day in the case of that portion of the Israelitish nation which is still looking for the Messiah the prophet promised by Moses, and looking in vain because they will not hearken to the preaching of the Gospel concerning the Messiah who appeared as Jesus."

The words suggest a thought or two in relation to religious sincerity.

I. That religious sincerity is no PROOF OF THE ACCURACY OF RELIGIOUS CREED. These Israelites seem to have been sincere in their worship of the golden calf; "they swore by it." That

dumb idol to them was everything. To it they pledged the homage of their being. Yet how blasphemously erroneous, how contrary to the express mandate of Jehovah, "Thou shalt have no other gods but me"! How contrary to the dictates of common sense and all sound reasoning! Idolatry, in every form and everywhere, is a huge falsehood. Hence sincerity is no proof that a man has the truth. There are millions of men in all theologies and religions, who are so sincere in believing lies, that they will fight for their lies, make any sacrifice for their lies, die for their lies. Error perhaps can number more martyrs than truth. Saul of Tarsus was sincere when he was persecuting the Church and endeavouring to blot the name of Christ from the memory of his age. "I verily thought within myself that I ought to do many things contrary to Jesus of Nazareth," etc. Hence sincerity is not necessarily virtuous. A man is sincere when he is faithful to his convictions; but if his convictions are unsound, immoral, ungodly, his sincerity is a crime. The fact that thousands have died for dogmas is no proof of the truth of their dogmas. The words suggest,—

II. That religious sincerity IS NO PROTECTION AGAINST THE PUNISHMENT THAT FOLLOWS ERROR. "They shall fall, and rise no more." The sincerity of the Israelites in their worship in Bethel and at Dan prevented not their ruin. There are those who hold that man is not responsible for his beliefs—that so long as he is sincere he is a true man, and all

things will go well with him. In every department of life God holds a man responsible for his beliefs. If a man take poison into his system, sincerely believing that it is nutriment, will his belief save him? Error leads evermore to disappointment, confusion, and oftentimes to utter destruction. To follow error, is to go away from reality; and to leave reality, is to leave safety and peace.

CONCLUSION: Whilst there is no true man without sincerity, sincerity of itself does not make a man true. When a man's convictions correspond and square with everlasting realities, then his sincerity is of incomparable worth.

NO. CV.

Subject: GREAT SINS, GREAT CALAMITIES, GREAT EFFORTS.

"I saw the Lord standing upon the altar: and He said, Smite the lintel of the door, that the posts may shake: and cut them in the head, all of them; and I will slay the last of them with the sword: he that fleeth of them shall not flee away, and he that escapeth of them shall not be delivered. Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: and though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them: and though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good."—Amos ix. 1-1.

"This chapter commences with an account of the fifth and last vision of the prophet, in which the final ruin of the kingdom of Israel is represented. This ruin was to be complete and irreparable; and no quarter to which the inhabitants might flee for refuge would afford them any shelter from the wrath of the Omnipresent and Almighty Jehovah."

The prophet in vision sees the Almighty standing upon the altar, and hears Him give the command to smite the lintel of the temple door that the posts may shake; in other words, to destroy the temple. The temple here, is not, I think, the temple at Jerusalem, the temple of true worship, but the temple of idolatrous worship. The passage suggests three remarks.

I. That under the **RIGHTEOUS GOVERNMENT OF GOD GREAT SIN EXPOSES TO GREAT CALAMITY.** How terrible the calamities here referred to! The Israelites, when threatened by the Assyrians, would flock in crowds to Bethel and implore protection from the golden calf. But the very place where they sought protection would prove their ruin. Jehovah says, "Smite the lintel of the door, that the posts may shake: and cut them in the head, all of them; and I will slay the last of them with the sword," etc. The sin of these Israelites in their idolatrous worship was great. They were the descendants of Abraham the friend of God. As a people, they were chosen of God and blessed with a thousand opportunities of knowing what was right and true in doctrine and in practice. Yet they gave themselves up to

idolatry. Hence these terrible calamities. The greater the sin the greater the punishment. "Unto whom much is given, much will be required." "He that knoweth his Master's will and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." "It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah," etc.

II. **THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF APPROACHING CALAMITIES WILL STIMULATE TO GREAT EFFORTS FOR ESCAPE.** "Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down." There are here supposed attempts at escape. There is the supposed attempt to get into hell—Sheol, the dark realm of shadows, where they could conceal themselves. There is an attempt to climb Mount Carmel, 1200 feet in height, there to conceal themselves under the shadows, intricacies, and the crowded forests of oaks, pines, laurels, etc., and also in the deep caves running down to the sea. Men in view of great dangers always seek refuge. The sinner here, when he finds death approaching, what strenuous efforts does he employ in order to escape the monster's touch. On the great day of retribution sinners are represented as crying to the rocks and mountains to fall on them.

III. **THE GREATEST EFFORTS TO ESCAPE MUST PROVE UTTERLY FUTILE WHEN GOD HAS GIVEN THE SINNER UP.** "Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them," etc. There are many similar passages to these in the Bible, such as the following. "If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I

make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there" (Ps. cxxxix. 8). "Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds; yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung: they which have seen him shall say, Where is he?" (Job xx. 6, 7). "Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from Me shall spoilers come unto her, saith the Lord" (Jer. li. 53). "Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord." Whatever the efforts of the sinner in the prospect of approaching danger, there is no escape for him. God is everywhere, and everywhere all-seeing, all-just, and Almighty.]

CONCLUSION: The only way to escape utter ruin, is to renounce your sin, and commit yourself unto the safe keeping of Him who is the Redeemer of mankind.

NO. CVI.

Subject: GOD AS THE ADMINISTRATOR OF JUSTICE.

"And the Lord God of hosts is He that toucheth the land, and it shall melt, and all that dwell therein shall mourn: and it shall rise up wholly like a flood; and shall be drowned, as by the flood of Egypt. It is He that buildeth His stories in the heaven, and hath founded His troop in the earth; He that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: the Lord is His name. Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto Me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord. Have not I brought up

Israel out of the land of Egypt? and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?"—*Amos ix. 5-7.*

These words present God to us as the administrator of justice.

I. He does it with the GREATEST EASE. The administrators of justice in connection with human government have often to contend with difficulties that baffle and confound them. But the Almighty has no difficulty. "He toucheth the land and it shall melt." By a mere touch He can punish a whole nation, nay, destroy the world. Whence come earthquakes and volcanoes? Here is their cause, "He toucheth the hills and they smoke." Never can there be any miscarriage of justice with God. He bears it right home in every case. He has no difficulty about it. He toucheth the clouds and they drown the world; He kindles the atmosphere and burns cities, etc.

II. He does it with ALL THE POWERS OF NATURE AT HIS COMMAND." It is He that buildeth His stories in the heaven, and hath founded His troop in the earth." His throne is on high, above all the forms and forces of the universe, and all are at His call. From those heights which He has built, those upper chambers of the universe, He can pour floods to drown a world, or rain fires which will consume the universe. Every force in nature He can make with ease an officer to execute His justice.

III. He does it DISREARDFUL OF MERE RELIGIOUS PROFESSION. "Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? and the Philistines from Caphtor,

and the Syrians from Kir?" Jehovah here repels the idea which the Israelites were so prone to entertain, that because He had brought them out of Egypt and given them the land of Canaan they were peculiarly the objects of His regard, and could never be subdued or destroyed. He now regarded and would treat them as the Cushites, who had been transplanted from their primal location in Arabia into the midst of the barbarous nations of Africa. The Almighty, in administering justice, is not influenced by the plea of profession. A corrupt Israelite to Him was as bad as an Ethiopian, though he calls Abraham his father. "Think not to say that ye have Abraham for your father." Conventional Christians are in the eyes of God as bad as infidels or heathen. He judgeth not as man judgeth,

by the outward appearance; He looketh at the heart.

IV. He does it WITH A THOROUGH DISCRIMINATION OF CHARACTER. "Behold the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord." There were some good people amongst the Israelites, men of genuine goodness; the Great Judge would not destroy them. "I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob. . . . I will sift the house of Israel among all nations like as corn is sifted in a sieve," etc. He would burn up the chaff but save the wheat. Evermore will the Almighty Judge recognise and tenderly guard the virtuous and the good, however humble their position in life. He will not destroy the righteous.

Homiletical Breviaries.

No. CLXXVIII.

Subject: OUR FATHER.

"Our Father."—MATTHEW vi. 9.

Is the Infinite One our Father? I. Then we ARE MOST DISTINGUISHED CREATURES. First: Distinguished in nature. Rolling oceans, mountains, rivers and forests, revolving worlds and systems, and the universe of irrational beings, are creatures of God; but they are not His offspring, His children; they cannot say, "Our Father." Children participate in the nature of their parents. God is a Spirit, and so are we. God has freedom, conscience, moral sensibilities, so have we. Constitutionally, we are like God as

children are like their parents. There is more of God's nature in us than in the whole material irrational universe. Secondly: Distinguished in *privilege*. A father loves his children more than he loves his property, however great, the productions of his genius and power, however brilliant and valuable. God loves man more than He loves aught in this world beside; man is His child. As a Father, God educates His children and makes ample provision for them. "Our Father." II. Then we ARE ALL FRATERNALLY RELATED. Humanity is one great brotherhood, and the sentiment of brotherhood should animate and rule all. It should be stronger than nationality, stronger than patriotism, stronger than ecclesiastical affinities, stronger than commercial competitions. Love for the common Father should unite all hearts together in carrying out His paternal purposes and pleasing His paternal heart. "Our Father." III. Then LOVE MUST BE THE ESSENCE OF ALL DIVINE LAWS, AND THE SPIRIT OF ALL TRUE OBEDIENCE. All the moral laws of God are but the expressions of Fatherly love; and the whole may be resolved into one short precept, viz., Be happy. God's great code is but a father speaking in the imperative mood. Avoid that which will injure you; pursue that which will fill you with blessedness. And whilst love is the essence of law, filial love is the spirit of all obedience. Fear of punishment, hope of heaven, as motives, can never insure true and acceptable obedience.

NO. CLXXIX.

Subject: A GLORIOUS FACT CONCERNING CHRIST, AND A DISGRACEFUL FACT CONCERNING MAN.

"And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That He was gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner."—LUKE xix. 7.

In this passage we have two things worthy of notice. I. A GLORIOUS fact concerning CHRIST. He became the guest of a sinner. First: This was a very *unpopular* act. The particular sinner referred to here is Zaccheus. Being a tax-gatherer, Zaccheus was a very unpopular man—what would be called in this country a disreputable character. Christ set popularity at defiance. He was always in the minority, as the true men of all times have been. Secondly: This was a very *merciful* act. The profoundest necessity of all sinners is the want of a visit from Christ. He is the only Physician that can heal the malady that is working out

their death. He is the only emancipator that can snap their chains, break open their dungeons, and lead them out to freedom and light. Thirdly: This was a very *self-denying* act. The more pure and tender the moral susceptibilities of a being, the more pain he would experience in being brought into contact with impurity and vice. Fourthly: This was a very *encouraging* act. Because Christ became the guest of this sinner, we may be encouraged to hope that He will visit us. He goes, we hope, to be the guest of many a sinner every day. Oh, haste the time when all human hearts shall welcome Him as their guest. In this passage we have II. A DISGRACEFUL fact concerning MAN.' "When they saw it they all murmured." They "murmured." First: It was the murmuring of *ignorance*. They were ignorant of the fact that "He came into the world to call sinners to repentance." Their murmuring was as ignorant as if they murmured at the sun when he rises above the hills and breaks the darkness of the night, as if they murmured at the fertilizing showers as they descend to refresh the parched land. They "murmured." Secondly: It was the murmuring of *simulated sanctity*. They "murmured." Who were they? Undoubtedly the sanctimonious Pharisees. They professed to have their piety shocked at His visit to such a man. They "murmured." Thirdly: It was the murmuring of *wounded pride*. They were envious that such a man should be noticed by the great Teacher. There have always been men who murmured at the conduct of Christ at visiting sinners. Instead of murmuring, there should be exultant gratitude to Christ, and high joy on account of the blessedness of the advent of such a guest.

No. CLXXX.

Subject: MAN HONOURING GOD AND GOD HONOURING MAN.

"Them that honour Me I will honour."—1 SAMUEL ii. 30.

Observe two things. I. MAN HONOURING GOD AS A DUTY. How can man honour God? Not by making Him greater than He is. He is infinitely glorious. Not by ascribing to Him, in song or prayer and in sublimest forms of speech, the highest attribute of being. How then? First: By a practical *reverence* for His *greatness*. His greatness should be realized in every step of life. The ground on which we stand is holy. The world is the house of God and the gate of heaven. Life should be reverent, not frivolous

Secondly: By a practical *gratitude* for His goodness. He is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all the works of His hand. His goodness should fill the soul with a reigning gratitude. Thirdly: By a practical *adoration* for His excellence. The heavens declare His glory, yea the whole earth is full of His glory. This should be practically recognized in wonder, love, and praise. Observe, II., GOD HONOURING MAN AS A REWARD. "Them that honour Me I will honour." How does God honour such a man? First: With a *commission in His service*. He gives him work to do and qualification for its discharge. He makes them His messengers to do His will. Secondly: With an *adoption into His family*. He gives them the spirit of children by which they cry, "Abba, Father." He feels for them as His children, treats them as His children, and makes ample provision for their everlasting well-being. Thirdly: With a *participation in His glory*. "Enter into the joy of thy Lord." He makes them His heirs.

No. CLXXXI.

Subject: FAMILIARITY WITH CHRIST.

"He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto Him, Lord, who is it?"—JOHN xiii. 25.

This remarkable incident reveals great *familiarity* with Christ. John leans on the Saviour's bosom. Personal Christianity is an *intimate* connection with Christ. To be a true Christian, is to be more familiar with Christ than with fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters. I. This familiarity involves THE MOST AMAZING CONDESCENSION. Little magnates of earth deem it a great condescension to allow the humble and the lowly to speak to them even at a distance. But here is the Author and Proprietor of the universe, the Infinitely Holy, as well as transcendently Great, permitting poor frail sinful man to lean on His bosom. "Though He is high yet hath He respect unto the lowly." The humblest soul is dear to Him. First: Let this condescension inspire us with adoring gratitude. Secondly: Let this condescension consume that pride which prompts man to keep the poor at a distance. II. This familiarity involves THE SUBLIMEST PRIVILEGE. To be so closely allied to Christ as this, is to be in the safest, happiest, and most honourable position. What honour, to recline on the bosom of the King of kings and Lord of lords! Paul said, "To be with Christ is far

better." Yes; to be with Christ is to be secure, joyous, and dignified. III. This familiarity involves THE DEEPEST REVERENCE. John addresses Christ as Lord. "Lord, who is it?" Familiarity with men, the proverb says, breeds contempt. We know it often breeds discontent. So imperfect are the best of men, that, as a rule, the more we know of them, the less reverence we have. Not so familiarity with Christ; the more we know of Him, the profounder our reverence. "Lord, who is it?"

Scientific Facts used as Symbols.

"Books of Illustration" designed to help preachers, are somewhat, we think, too abundant. They are often made up to a great extent of anecdotes from the sentimental side of life, and not always having a healthful influence or historic foundation. We find that preachers and hearers are getting tired of such. Albeit illustrations are needed by every speaker who would interest the people, and are sanctioned by the highest authority. Nature itself is a parable. Hence we have arranged with a naturalist who has been engaged in scientific investigation for many years, to supply the Homilet with such reliable and well-ascertained facts in nature, as cultured and conscientious men may use with confidence, as mirrors of morals and diagrams of doctrines.

Subject: The Equable Temperament,—Atmospheric Evenness.

SOME men are blessed with that temper which is equal and uniform at all times. The violence of wrath never heats them, and the disappointments and vexations of life fail to chill the even geniality of their disposition. The thermometer of their temper rises and falls only within the most limited range, and therefore you can always calculate upon the presence of all the products of calmness, and the absence of the vices which are incidental to characters which are less benign. As with men, so with climates. Some countries are fortunate in the enjoyment of a climate exempt from remarkable vicissitudes of temperature; there are no sudden transitions from heat to cold, nor does the summer differ much from the winter. Here it is natural to expect that animal and vegetable life will flourish, and that diseases connected with atmospheric changes will be few in number and mild in

character. Of this, New Holland, which enjoys a very uniform temperature, furnishes an apt illustration. Vegetables and shrubs are here evergreen, and the groves and forests are clad in a perpetual verdure. There is no shedding of leaves in winter, and nature presents the whole year round all the luxuriance of summer. Similarly, in the faces of some men of equable temperament, they under all circumstances present evermore the same placid smile.

Subject: Fictitious Prestige,—the Chimpanzees and the Negroes.

IT would be a marvellous investigation, to ascertain the principles upon which honour, credit, and reputation are bestowed on men by their fellows. Very often there is no more just ground for the reputation men are enjoying than there is for the reputation which the chimpanzees have acquired. The chimpanzees live in troops in the forest, or at least they congregate for the purpose of repelling the attacks made upon them by the carnaria, and to drive from their domains such other animals as may attempt to install themselves therein to their disadvantage. Their weapons are ready to their hand,—stones and the branches of trees. Like the ourangs, they construct rude beds or couches of interwoven boughs, stripped of their greenery. In consequence of this the negroes of Guinea, scarcely much higher in the scale of intelligence than themselves, look upon them as a *nation*, and believe that if these men of the woods do not speak, it is because they fear to be condemned to work, or carried off into slavery, and not from incapacity. So these creatures have credit for being a nation, and, as it also seems, for being very acute and shrewd. It is obvious that in many other instances among men, individuals and classes are credited with powers and a *status* which are entirely fictitious. "In the kingdom of the blind the one-eyed man is king." Stupid conventionality, stolid prejudice, cold formality, and long habit, have all had the effect of so dwarfing our mental capacity, that we are

constantly ascribing to those whom the accident of birth has placed in a sphere different from our own, some wonderful ability which they cannot possess, and some extraordinary power which does not exist. In all this we are like those negroes of Guinea, for we look up at assemblages of little men in elevated positions, and ascribe to them fictitious prestige, as they look up at the chimpanzees, and actually conceive them to be in mind sagacious and in social power a nation.

Subject: The Energy of Unobtrusive Life.

CONSIDERED with reference to mass, the vegetable far exceeds the animal world on the face of the globe. The animal kingdom wants mass, and the motions of individuals withdraw them frequently from our sight, and we do not think of the energy which we do not see. Now the vegetable world works upon our imagination by the mere force of quantity. In the animal kingdom it is precisely that life that we are about to designate as the smallest in point of room, which, by its sub-division and rapid increase, presents in reality the most remarkable relations in respect of mass. The smallest of the Infusoria, the Monadæ, only obtain a diameter of $\frac{1}{30000}$ of a line, yet do these siliceous-shelled organisms, in most countries, compose, by their accumulation, subterraneous strata several fathoms in thickness. In the same way there are tremendous forces at work in society, which the majority of mankind pass unheeded because they are so occupied with gazing at the mere mass of accomplished facts which lies on the surface of observation. Underneath all this display and quantity of accomplished things, there are innumerable individual influences in a state of energy and multiplication; and at the very basis of national life, yet unobtrusively, they so work as to affect the strata of society, altering the position of primæval landmarks, shaking old foundations, and changing the position of ancient institutions.

Subject: The Hidden Uses of Unadmired Things,—The Deserts.

IF we do not at once see the use of a thing which is un-beautiful, we are apt to disdain it altogether. Utility or beauty we demand as a characteristic of everything. But let it be constantly remembered that our limited vision and knowledge often prevent our discerning the uses which exist in things. Do not be deceived by the mere appearances. The sandy deserts, which one might have been inclined to consider as mere incumbrances on the earth, are of high importance in creating winds. They send off vast streams of hot air into the higher regions of the atmosphere, and hence the cooler air off the coasts is sucked away in an opposite direction. The deserts, indeed, may be regarded as vast suction-pumps providentially placed at certain stations on the earth to create useful winds and help the transport of moisture to lands that are in want of it. But for the Thibetian deserts there would have been no south-west monsoon, the fertile plains of Hindostan would have been a waste of sand.

Subject: The Coralline,—The Fecund Force of Humility.

THE little and the lowly may be found in combination with wondrous energy. The coralline, which may be found most abundantly on any of our coasts, growing in greatest perfection near low-water mark,—is a small plant, seldom exceeding five or six inches in height, and not even reaching that size. However it compensates for its low stature by its luxuriant growth, being usually found in dense masses wherever it can find a convenient shelter. If the vital force of this plant had shot upwards, pushing out numerous and majestic branches in the air, and covering itself with abundant leafage and blossom, it would have attracted more attention and admiration; but it would not have gained force or, perhaps, usefulness thereby. Thus with human minds. Those whose powers shoot upward by some splendid feat of genius in literature or battle, arrest public attention and win

public plaintiffs. Whereas, possibly, they neither gain more strength nor achieve more usefulness than those less showy men who work modestly for the common good in the obscurer regions of human life, and who, like the coralline plant, are always accessible to those who seek them at the low-water mark of life's affairs.

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

ORIGINAL SIMILITUDES.

SUFFERING WRONGFULLY.—A man who suffers wrongfully for conscience' sake, sweeps away those fogs and mists that conceal the spiritual world, and leaves the whole blooming in beauty and glowing in sunshine. More, he drowns within him the din and tumult of selfish passions, and fills his being with transporting strains of heavenly music. As in the centre of old ocean there is an unruffled calm when storms are lashing its surface into mountain billows, so in the central depths of him who has an approving conscience there is a peace which no storm can ruffle, which the world can neither give nor take away.

THE CHRISTIAN.—There is no instrument God can use in so many ways and places, and with such wonderful success, as a devoted Christian who can show himself a man—a man who has the tear of sympathy for the sorrowing, a word of comfort for the bereaved, and a word of hope for the downcast and desponding. Such a man, in the ministry or out of it, is a polished shaft in the hand of

the Almighty; he will find a road to the confidence and heart of the people, or make one.

SIN.—The sins of a nation draw judgment after them, as the moon draws after it the billows that beat upon the shore. Let no nation hope to escape judgments until it gets rid of sin. Judgments are but sins ripened into a harvest, subterranean fires breaking into volcanoes. Eternal love requires for the order and happiness of the universe that sins and sorrows, transgressions and troubles, should be inseparably linked together.

SELFISHNESS.—More than half the worship of England is purely selfish. Men crowd churches, attend to religious ceremonies, and contribute to religious institutions, purely with the idea of avoiding hell and getting to a happier world than this. They do not serve God for nought. Abounding worship often springs from abounding sin.

HUMILITY, THE PATH TO HONOUR.—Here is the fixed law of heaven. The moral spirit that

would ascend to true dignity, win a name that shall command the reverence both of earth and heaven, must empty itself of all selfish motives and personal interests. There are two hills lying opposite each other, one is the hill of personal pride—barren, bleak, cloudy; the other is the hill of Divine dignity—grand, sunny, blooming in beauty, and abounding in fruit, crowned with the pavilion of Godhead. No soul can ascend the one without descending the other; he must go down the brow of selfishness step by step till he reaches the dark valley of self-abnegation, and then upward he may commence scaling the sublime altitudes of Divine dignity and bliss.

IDLENESS.—No man has a right to consume unless he produces. He who consumes, and produces nothing, robs society.

GODLINESS cannot conceal itself. Divine goodness is ever more self-revealing. As the face of Moses shone with a mystic radiance when he came down from the mount after holding fellowship with God, so the lives of all godly men are encircled with a Divine halo.

THE RIGHT PLACE.—As God has put every planet into its separate orbit, and each to move around the sun, so He has put every good man in his particular course of life, and on that course he pursues his way with a vigour and a wisdom derived from heaven.

GODLIKENESS.—We are all commanded to be imitators of God, to be partakers of the Divine nature, to be holy even as He is holy. How can the finite imitate the infinite? Not in natural attributes, but in

spirit and aim; and though we cannot do what He does, we can have the spirit that inspires Him in all His procedure, viz., love.

CONSCIENCE.—When the time comes for it to speak, speak it must; you cannot muffle its voice. Like the subterranean fire, though it sleeps for awhile under the green hills of worldly prosperity and interests, when its time comes it will break into thunder and shake the globe.

BASKET OF SUMMER FRUIT.—How beautiful are these fruits of the earth! Their exquisite forms in boundless variety; their lovely tints, their bloom and gorgeous hues, how beautiful! Deep within us all is the love for the beautiful. The God who planted within us the sentiment ministers abundantly to it in these baskets of fruit. He makes the material to minister, not only to the body, but to the mind as well, and chiefly so, for the world overflows with beauty.

BOOKS.—A good book is a book that aims at disciplining both the intellect and the heart. It aids the intellect to think with freedom, force, and precision, and the heart to flow with pure loves and high aspirations.

SINS.—Sins bring with them their own punishment. No positive infliction is required; every sin is a seed, from which a pestiferous plant must spring.

INTUITION.—As a rule, nothing is more offensive to a great intuitional nature, than logical processes; the man of intuition sees the truth at once, and feels an error as the tender flower a blast of cold air. He

is impatient with logic; but when that logic is the vehicle for religious fallacies, he cries out from the depths of his soul: "Oh that ye would altogether hold your peace!"

BIGOTRY in all ages has tried to suppress the moral convictions of men. The attempt is more mad than the attempt to prevent the volcanic fires from riving the mountains by covering them with cement. A man may suppress his convictions on other subjects, such as literature, science, art; but so vital are religious convictions to him, that they fill his nature with fires that must break out.

CONDUCT, NOT CREED, determines destiny. Well-doing, heaven; ill-doing, hell.

LOVE.—Man loves because he is human; man's love turns into agony because he is sinful.

TRUE GREATNESS.—Worldly greatness is contemptible in the presence of that spiritual greatness which reflects the character of God; and that grows brighter and brighter for ever.

LIVING IN CHARACTER.—Man lives in the character of man; children live in the character of their parents; the present generation lives in the character of the past. The characters of men of departed ages constitute the atmosphere in which the men of this age live and move and have their being. All unregenerate men live in the character of the first Adam. All true souls live in the character of Christ; they incorporate His principles, they imbreath His Spirit, they get fashioned by His will. What higher state of being is conceivable, than to be in the heart and character of such a "Beloved One"?

DIVINE LOVE.—God's free grace is the primal font of all human virtue and blessedness in the world. Justice is but love standing up sternly against the wrong; mercy is but love bending in tenderness over the helpless and suffering. Current occurrences are Divine dispensations in human life; they have a voice that should be heard, a significance that should be studied; their records are our Books of Chronicles, chronicles of kings and peoples as they now are on the earth.

WEAR AND TEAR.—All beneath the sun is wearing out—the mountains are falling, the rocks are being removed, the stones are being washed away; the things that grow out of the earth are dying, the hopes of man are being destroyed, the whole generation of men are passing away as shadows under the sun. It is said that the old Romans painted honour in the temple of Apollo, as representing the form of a man with a rose in his right hand, a lily in his left, above him a marigold, and under him wormwood, with the inscription, *Levate*, "consider." The rose denotes that man flourishes as a flower, but at length is withered and cast away. The lily denotes the favour of man, which is easily lost, and is soon of no account. The marigold shows the fickleness of prosperity. The wormwood signifies that all the delights of the world are sweet in execution, but bitter in retribution. *Levate*, consider what lesson of earthly vanity is here.

YOUTHFUL SINS are bound with the indissoluble chain of

causation to man's futurity. Human experience is not like an isolated raindrop, that falls from the clouds above and is soon exhaled by the sun; but it is like a river, whose present character has been entirely formed by its past history: the soil through which it has flowed, the streams that have rolled into its bosom, have given to it its present hue, form, and volume. Man's actions of to-day are the result of those of yesterday and the cause of those of to-morrow.

GOD WITHIN.—If there is no God within, there is no God without. Men in whose hearts the Divine Word is not, have no ears to hear the Infinite, though He speaks in thunder, no eyes to see Him, though He fills up their horizon.

THE WORLD'S HEROES are evermore the incarnation of the world's thoughts; and those thoughts are, alas! far away from the immutable realities. He whose character and status are most in keeping with the popular sentiment will ever be the greatest magnate for the time.

GOOD DEEDS.—Every true thought, every earnest prayer, every godly deed, carry in themselves success. As all the elements and forces of this old world go to build up a new stratum around the globe's surface, for geologists of coming ages to study, so all that I do and think and say in the work of the Lord goes to give blessedness to my being. All the waters of holy thought and effort we now receive into our

being go to make a well within us that will spring up to everlasting life.

RELIGION.—God must be the all in all—the grand figure in all the sceneries, and the ruling chord in all the melodies of life. Man is made to worship; but worship is not a ceremony, not a passing sentiment, not an occasional service, it is a life revealing itself everywhere—in marts of business, halls of study, fields of recreation, as well as in conventional temples. It is not a something that appears on this mountain or on that mountain, on this day or that day, in this act or that act; but something that is everywhere and everywhen. The grand pulse of being.

EMPTY LIVES.—A life without moral goodness is necessarily deceptive. It walks in a vain show, it deceives itself and deceives others; it is an acted lie from beginning to end. How many lives seem full of promise! They awaken as much interest and as much hope as clouds that float over parched lands; but they result in nothing but disappointment. Oh, what lives there are which are like clouds without water!

MERCY.—Mercy, like the mystic pillar that guided the Israelites in the wilderness, has two sides—a bright one to guide and cheer, and a dark one to confound and destroy. Mercy abused becomes a determined resistless destroyer. A plant that is not strengthened by the sunbeam, is scorched; the soul that is not saved by mercy, is damned.

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF ST. LUKE. By F. GODET. VOLS. I. and II. Translated by M. D. CUSIN. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 38, George Street.

The writer is well known as the author of an excellent commentary on the Gospel of St. John, and he regards the Gospel of which he treats in these two volumes as best fitted to serve as a complement to his former exegetical work. And truly Luke's writing constitutes in several important respects a transition between the view taken by John and that which forms the basis of the synoptical literature. The method which he here pursues is very similar to that of his commentary on St. John, which is not yet however translated into English. The following extract from the preface will put our readers in possession of the nature and aim of the work:—

"I have not written merely for professed theologians: nor have I aimed directly at edification. This work is addressed in general to those readers of culture, so numerous at the present day, who take a heart-felt interest in the religious and critical questions which are now under discussion. To meet their requirements, a translation has been given of those Greek expressions which it was necessary to quote, and technical language has as far as possible been avoided. The most advanced ideas of modern unbelief circulate at the present time in all our great centres of population. In the streets of our cities, workmen are heard talking about the conflict between St. Paul and the other apostles of Jesus Christ. We must therefore endeavour to place the results of a real and impartial Biblical science within reach of all. I repeat respecting this Commentary what I have already said of its predecessor, it has been written, not so much with a view to its being consulted, as read.

"From the various readings I have had to select those which had a certain value, or presented something of interest. A commentary cannot pretend to supply the place of a complete critical edition, such as all scientific study requires. Since I cannot in any way regard the eighth edition of Tischendorf's text, just published, as a standard text, though I gratefully acknowledge its aid as absolutely indispensable, I have adopted

the received text as a basis in indicating the various readings; but I would express my earnest desire for an edition of the Byzantine text that could be regarded as a standard authority. Frequently I have contented myself with citing the original text of the ancient MSS., without mentioning the changes offered, anything that could be of any interest I have indicated them.

"If I am asked with what scientific or religious assumptions I have approached this study of the third Gospel, I reply with these two only, that the authors of our Gospels were men of good *sense*, and good *faith*."

This we consider to be a very enlightened and suggestive exposition. We shall be glad to hear that the enterprising publishers have met with sufficient success with these volumes to justify them in bringing out the author's exposition on John in English garb.

SIX LECTURES ON QUESTIONS INDICATIVE OF CHARACTER. By REV. W. HARRIS. London: Dickenson & Higham, 73, Farringdon Street.

These Lectures are not common productions. They have none of the patent phrases of hoary theologies. The author thinks for himself, and puts his thoughts into his own language, which is clear and unpretentious but strong. As a "maiden production," which we presume it to be, it claims to be treated with tenderness and respect. But it has merits to command most respectful attention. We trust the author will be encouraged to go on, and that we shall meet him again in some literary path.

THE HOMILIST. VOL. X. EDITOR'S SERIES. London: Simpkin and Marshall.

This volume, whilst it contains about *one hundred* sermons more or less elaborated,—most of them on subjects seldom preached from, yet of vital importance,—abounds with a variety of other matter in order to promote pulpit efficiency. For example, there are about *seventeen* articles under the heading of "*Scientific Facts used as Symbols*." There are many works extant, intended as "illustrations" to help the pulpit; but many of the anecdotes have no foundation in fact, whilst others are absurd and sensational. It is time for the pulpit to look elsewhere for illustrations—to look to nature, which is a grand parable. This volume contains a number of striking scientific facts that serve to mirror theological and ethical truths. In addition to all this there are many scores of "*Original Similitudes*." We would take the opportunity of reminding our readers, that as the Editor's Series is drawing to a close, those who wish to procure the volumes would do well to make early application.

THE HOMILIST.

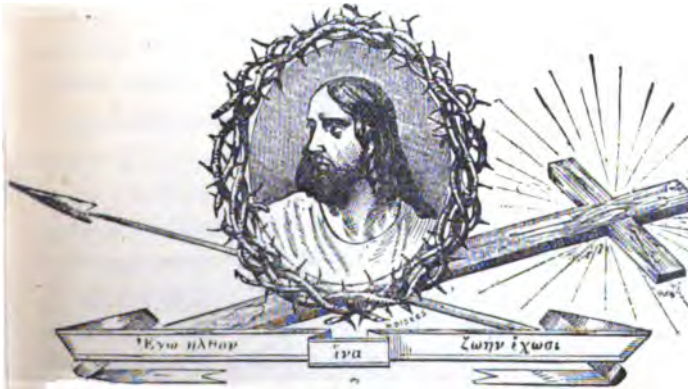
CONDUCTED BY

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.,

COMPILER OF "THE BIBLICAL LITURGY," AUTHOR OF "THE PHILOSOPHY
OF HAPPINESS," "THE PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHER," "GENIUS
OF THE GOSPEL," ETC., ETC.

VOL. XII. EDITOR'S SERIES.

VOLUME XXXVII. FROM COMMENCEMENT.



"THE LETTER KILLETH, BUT THE SPIRIT GIVETH LIFE."—*Paul.*

LONDON:
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO.,
STATIONERS' HALL COURT.

—
1875.



PREFACE.

THIS Volume, the THIRTY-SEVENTH of the HOMILIST, is the twelfth and the last of the Editor's Series.

Although upwards of ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY THOUSAND volumes have been sold, it will be gratifying for our friends to know that the demand is as great as ever, and that a new Series is called for. This Series will be much *larger* than any of the preceding ones, will contain a greater variety of matter, and have an additional Editor and many new Contributors.

As the old key-note will still rule the melodies of the HOMILIST, and no new specific description is requisite, the former Preface may be again transcribed.

"First: The book has no *finish*. The Editor has not only not the time to give an artistic finish to his productions, but not even the *design*. Their incompleteness is *intentional*. He has drawn some marble slabs together, and hewn them roughly, but has left other hands to delineate minute features, and so polish them into beauty. He has dug up from the Biblical mine some precious ore, smelted a little, but left all the smithing to others. He has presented 'germs,' which, if sown in good soil, under a free air and an open sky, will produce fruit that may draw many famishing spirits into the vineyard of the Church.

"Secondly: The book has no *denominationalism*. It has no special reference to 'our Body' or to 'our Church.' As denominational strength is not necessarily *soul* strength, nor denominational religion necessarily the religion of humanity, it is the aim of the HOMILIST to minister that which universal man requires. It is for man as a citizen of the universe, and not for him as the limb of a sect.

"Thirdly: The book has no *polemical Theology*. The Editor—holding, as he does, with a tenacious grasp, the *cardinal* doctrines which constitute what is called the 'orthodox 'creed'—has, nevertheless, the deep and ever-deepening conviction, first, that such creed is but a very small portion of the truth that God has revealed or that man requires; and that no theological system can fully represent all the contents and suggestions of the great Book of God; and, secondly, that systematic theology is but means to an end. *Spiritual morality is that end*. Consequently, to the *heart* and *life* every Biblical thought and idea should be directed. Your systems of divinity the author will not disparage; but his impression is, that they can no more answer the purpose of the Gospel than *pneumatics* can answer the purpose of the atmosphere. In the case of Christianity, as well as the air, the world can live without its scientific truths; but it must have the free flowings of their vital elements. Coleridge has well said, 'Too soon did the doctors of the Church forget that the heart—the moral nature—was the beginning and the end, and that truth, knowledge, and insight were comprehended in its expansion.'

"The Editor would record his grateful acknowledgments to those free spirits of all Churches who have so earnestly rallied round him, to the many who have encouraged him by their letters, and to those especially who have aided him by their valuable contributions. May the 'last day' prove that the help rendered has been worthily bestowed; and that the HOMILIST did something towards the spiritual education of humanity, in its endeavours to bring the Bible, through the instrumentality of the pulpit, into a more immediate and practical contact with the every-day life of man."

DAVID THOMAS.

*Erewyn, Upper Tulse Hill,
London.*

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A HOMILY

ON

Practical Spiritualism.

"We walk by faith, not by sight."—2 Cor. v. 7.

WHAT does the writer mean by asserting that he and his fellow Christians walked "not by sight"? Did he ignore the material universe, or so underrate it as to pay it no attention? No. He observed it, he studied it, he admired it, he used it. The material, with its burning orbs above, its heaving oceans, flowing rivers, and majestic landscapes below, was to him a grand and ever-present reality. He speaks *comparatively*, and means that in the daily course of himself and his Corinthian brethren, they were influenced more by the invisible than the visible, by the spiritual and eternal than by the material and the temporal. They walked "by faith, not by sight." They were practical spiritualists.

In relation to this course of life, we may observe:

I. It is a more PHILOSOPHIC course. Whatever the thoughtless multitudes or sceptic scientists may aver, a life of practical spiritualism is far more rational than that of practical materialism.

First: Because the spiritual is more *real* than the material. Whatever men may say to the contrary, we have stronger evidence for the existence of spirit than we have for that of matter. True, the essence of both is beyond our vision or reach; it is hidden in impenetrable depths from us; and our only evidence of the existence of either, is derived from their operations or phenomena. But the phenomena of spirit come more closely and impressively to us, they come under our consciousness. Thought, volition, hope, fear—these are immediate subjects of consciousness, and these belong to the spirit. Indeed, the whole structure of the visible universe indicates the existence of spirit. The universe seems to be produced by and designed for spirit. Matter is essentially inert; but every part of nature is in motion. Matter is blind; but every part of nature indicates the most consummate contrivance. Matter is heartless; but every part of nature is warm and instinct with goodness. The whole system of creation, so far as it comes within my narrow vision, is a reflection of the ideas I attach to spirit. In every part of its wondrous structure “the invisible things,” as from a burnished mirror, are clearly seen. And then too it seems designed *for* spirit. Does not its exquisite contrivance appeal to thought, its warm and ever gushing streams of goodness to gratitude, its enchanting realms of beauty to admiration, its infinite grandeur and sublimity, to reverence and awe? Indeed, the whole system of visible nature seems to me to imply spirit, and to be incomplete without it. Let landscapes unfold their beauty and oceans roll in grandeur. Let the immeasurable dome above display its radiant worlds by night and its glorious sun by day—all is lifeless without spirit. Without spirit there is no eye for beauty, no heart for goodness, no soul for sublimity and grandeur. What is this fair universe without spirit, but a magnificent mansion without a tenant; a theatre

disclosing the most enchanting scenes and inspiring plots, without a spectator; a temple filled with the glories of the Shekinah, but containing no worshipper? I infer therefore that wherever there is a streak of beauty, a ray of glory, or a note of music, in whatever orb, however far away, there are spirits to study, adore, and love.

The concurrent impressions also of mankind, sustain the belief. From remotest times, in all places and in every stage of culture, from the lowest point to the highest, men have believed in the spiritual. The philosophy of the sage, as well as the superstition of the savage and the fancy of the poet, has peopled the atmosphere with ghosts. The Chaldeans, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and Jews, as well as the polytheistic world in all times, regarded every section of nature as filled with spirits. The Gods of the heathen were but the forms which man devised to represent his ideas of mysterious spirits that tenanted the earth, ruled the elements, and presided over the destinies of our race. Man cannot shake off faith in spiritual existence. The child believes in it without evidence; and the old man who has passed through a life of scepticism, as in the case of Robert Owen, becomes a firm believer in tales of ghostly exploit. Men see spirits, not only in dim twilight, but in the high noon of civilization. A belief so universal must be intuitive; and any intuitive belief must be true, otherwise there is no truth for man.

The Bible authoritatively declares this fact. It tells us of spirits that are ascending and descending between heaven and earth, that are ever moving the vast and complicated wheels of Providence, and that are always on the wing to execute the behests of their Sovereign. It tells us that there are legions of such existences, that they exist in various orders and states; and that there is One Infinite Spirit, the Parent,

Sustainer, and Judge of all, who is above all, and in all, and through all—God blessed for ever. I am bound to believe, then, that the universe is something more than I can see; something more than can be brought within the cognizance of my five senses; something distinct from the terraqueous globe on which I live, and the huge worlds of flame that roll above me and shed their brightness on my path; something behind all, or rather in all and above all. Ay, the angels, demons, genii, sylphs, and ghosts of which all nations have thought and spoken, are something more than the airy offspring of a superstitious imagination; there are existences answering, in some degree at least, to the notions which humanity has ever attached to such mystic terms. I am not disposed to pronounce all who have stated that they have seen spirits, either fanatics or impostors. The *à priori* wonder is, not that they should be seen, but that they are not more generally perceived. We are related to the material world, and we have senses to discern material existences. We are confessedly more intimately and solemnly related to the spiritual; and is it not natural to expect that we should have a sense to see spiritual things? Were such a sense to be opened within us, as the eye of Elijah's servant was opened of old, what visions would burst upon us! The microscope gives us a new world of wonders; but were God to open the spiritual eye, what a universe of spirits would be revealed!

Secondly: Because the spiritual is more *influential* than the material. The invisible is to the visible what the soul is to the body, that which permeates, animates, works, and directs every part. Its spirit is in all the wheels of the material machine. It is the spring in all its forces, the beauty in all its forms, the glow in all its life.

Thirdly: Because the spiritual is more *lasting* than the material. The material is changeful and *transitory*.

Analogy suggests, science intimates, the Bible asserts, that "the heavens and the earth shall pass away," etc.

If, then, the spiritual is more real, influential, and lasting than the material, is it not more philosophic to have a more practical regard to it than to the material in passing through life? The one moves under the influence of mere appearances, and pursues shadows, and the other walks on in conscious fellowship with the real and the Eternal.

II. It is a more UNPOPULAR course. It is opposed to popular *science*. Popular science teaches that matter is everything—that out of it, as from a great mud egg, all things sprang, by it are supported, and to it must return again. It tells us that all thoughts about the invisible are idle and superstitious; it says, Look to the visible for everything—that secular science is the true Providence of man. Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die; ephemeral as we are, let us sport in the sunbeam while we have it, for the night of dark extinction will soon spread over us. It is opposed to popular *religion*. The popular religion, not only of heathendom, but of Christendom, is material; it is the religion of the senses; it is an appeal to the eye, the ear, the taste, the smell. It appeals to the senses, not only by the odour of the incense, the imitations of the cross, the genuflexions of the priest, and the sounds of the choristers, but also by the gross imagery employed in its popular hymns and sermons. All that the popular religionists know of Christ, they know after the flesh; all they feel about Him, are passing sensations. It is opposed, moreover, to popular *life*. The great bulk of mankind live a material life; their ideas of wealth, grandeur, beauty, dignity, pleasure, are all material. Their grand question is, "What shall we eat, what shall we drink, wherewithal shall we be clothed?" They are of the earth earthy; they mind earthly things; they live to

the flesh. Now the course here indicated by Paul, which all Christly souls pursue, is a practical protest against the so-called "positive philosophy" which has become popular in our times. The Christly man, in walking by faith, sets popular science, popular religion, popular life, at defiance. Though he is in the world he is not of the world.

III. It is a more BLESSED course.

First: It is more *safe* to work "by faith" than "bysight." "Appearances often lead astray." The senses are deceptive, the eye especially makes great mistakes. "Things are not what they seem;" nature is not what it seems; men are not what they seem. The eye would have us believe that the heavenly bodies are but lamps of various sizes hung up in the heavens; that the earth beneath our feet is the largest object within our notice, and that it sits like a queen in the midst of the system, serene and motionless, while all the heavenly luminaries, like attendant angels, pass round it, ministering evermore to the requirements of its life and to the brightness and beauty of its forms. In all this the eye deceives; and in a thousand other minor matters it is busy with its delusions. Reason collects evidence, and corrects those mistakes; it weighs the heavenly bodies, and tells their density to a grain; it measures them, and tells their dimensions to an inch; it calculates their velocity with the utmost accuracy. Reason has evidences on which to build a faith of unquestionable truthfulness.

Secondly: It is more *useful* to walk "by faith" than "by sight." Who is the more useful man in society—the man who walks by sight and is controlled in everything by appearances, who is materialistic in all his beliefs, interests, and pursuits; or the man whose mental eye penetrates all phenomena, enters into the invisible region of eternal principles, ascertains the real work they do in the universe, arranges them, and applies them to the uses

of man's daily life? Undoubtedly the latter. To the latter we owe all our inventions, all the blessings and arts that adorn civilized life. Albeit a stupid age calls the former a practical man, and the latter a theorist and a dreamer. The men who in past generations have walked by faith rather than by appearances, are the men to whom the world owes its civilization and its material prosperity. Were all men to walk by "sight," the race would soon sink into the lowest animal barbarism. In the *spiritual* department of life, the man who lives under the practical recognition of One whom no eye has seen or can see, and of an unseen Christ and an invisible universe, is the man who both enjoys for himself and diffuses amongst others the largest amount of happiness. He lives not on the banks of a pool that is always muddy and often dries up, dependent evermore upon atmospheric temperatures, but at the fountain-head, where the streams are crystal, refreshing, and perennial. He stands, not on the fragile bark of mere appearances, heaving evermore on surging and teacherous waves, but on the great rock of realities that remain unaltered and unalterable, the same from age to age.

Thirdly : It is more *ennobling* to walk "by faith" than "by sight." He who walks by sight is bounded by the material. Matter is his cradle, his nourishment, the circle of his activities, and his grave. On the contrary, he who walks by faith, towers into other regions, brighter, broader, and more blest. The man whose faith is bounded by the evidences of his senses, must have but a very narrow world. With the places he has not actually seen, he will have no interest, no connexion. The stupendous systems that roll away in the boundless districts of space, and the mighty principalities of spirits that populate those systems will be nothing to him. Nay, life, which is invisible, mind, which is invisible, God, who is invisible,

will be nothing to him, if he believes only what he sees.

CONCLUSION.—Which of these courses of life are we pursuing? Are we controlled by appearances or principles? Are we walking by faith or by sight? It is not difficult to determine this question for ourselves. Jesus Himself has supplied the test, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the spirit is spirit." He that walks by sight is in all his experiences, purposes, and pursuits, *flesh*. Matter is the centre of his being, the scene of his constant action, the fountain of his pleasures, the source of his emotions. His impulses to action are "fleshly lusts," his mind is a "fleshly mind," his wisdom is "fleshly wisdom." He may possess mind of a high order and educational attainments and embellishments of the first class, and still, in our Saviour's sense, be only *flesh*. He may be a merchant, artist, author; but the inspiration of his business, the glow of his genius, the tinge and form of his thoughts, will be flesh rather than spirit. Nay, he may be a religionist, and that of the most orthodox stamp; but his creed and devotions will be after the law of a carnal commandment. More than half the religion of Christendom is the religion of flesh. Its inspiration is fleshly feeling, its forms of thought are fleshly, its rules of life are fleshly, its Christ is known only after the flesh. It judges after the flesh, walks after the flesh, wars after the flesh; it is altogether sensuous and gross.

Wherever the body reigns, be it in the halls of science, the councils of cabinets; at the altars of devotion, or in the pulpits of Christianity, the man is flesh, and not spirit. He lives in the realm where nothing but forms are valued and seen—the sensuous realm, bounded above, beneath, and around by matter. His atmosphere is animal feeling, an atmosphere too hazy and thick to transmit the effulgent rays of the spiritual universe. He is flesh. On the

contrary, he who "walks by faith" is *spirit*. Spirit in the sense of *vivacity*. He is not sluggish and dull, but agile and blithe. All his faculties are instinct with a new life—the life of conscience, the true life of man. The eye of intellect is brightened, thought is active, imagination is always on the wing. He is spirit in the sense of *social recognition*. He is not known as other men are known, as men of the world, men who seek fleshly distinctions, fleshly wealth, and fleshly pleasure. But, as a spiritual man, he is known as a man distinguished by spiritual convictions, sympathies, and aims. He is spirit in the sense of *divinity*. He is born of the Divine Spirit, and has a kindredship with, and a resemblance to, his Eternal Father. He is a partaker of the Divine nature. His sympathies centre in the Divine, and his life reflects it. He is now a conscious citizen of the great spiritual kingdom. While here, he makes matter, in all its combinations and forms, his absolute subject and efficient servant, the means of spiritual growth, and the agent of his communion and intercourse with the spiritual and Divine.

To-morrow.—For some time had the Emperor Francis,—Maria Theresa's Consort,—been threatened with apoplexy, when, on the morning of 18th August, 1764, being pressed by his sister to be blooded, he answered, "I am engaged to sup with Joseph this evening, and will not disappoint him; but I promise you I will be blooded to-morrow." At the opera in the evening he was taken ill. Retiring, he was struck with apoplexy, and died at Joseph's feet, for he had fallen from Joseph's arms. At his feet—like one of olden time—he bowed, he fell, he lay down; where he bowed, there he fell down dead.—*Jacobs*.

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Psalms.

Our Purpose.—Many learned and devout men have gone philologically through this *THIRTIETH*, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal *hermeneutics* of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough *homiletic* treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

Our Method.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1) The *HISTORY* of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2) *ANNOTATIONS* of the passage. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase, or allusion that may occur.—(3) The *ASCERTAINMENT* of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is amongst the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4) The *HOURLYWORK* of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavour so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately educed, as to suggest such thoughts, and indicate such sermonising methods, as may promote the proficiency of modern pulpit ministrations.

Subject: An Old Sermon on a Subject ever New.

"Hear this, all ye people," etc.—PSALM xlix. 1-20.

HISTORY.—"To the chief Musician, A Psalm for the sons of Korah." This is the title of the psalm; we have had it several times before, and it has been elsewhere explained. This title is consistent with any date from the time of David to that of Ezra. As the subject is an old and universal one, and the psalm has no particular references or very marked features of style, we are left in doubt concerning both its occasion and authorship.

ANNOTATIONS: Ver. 1, 2.—"*Hear this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world: both high and low, rich and poor, together.*" The writer addresses himself to universal man, to man in all ages, all lands, and all conditions of life, "high and low, rich and poor." As the subject has no mere local or temporary interest, it is for the ear of the race in all countries, conditions, and centuries.

Ver. 8.—"*My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.*" If the author here speaks of himself, he speaks with reprehensible egotism; but if he speaks as the conscious organ of inspiration, he speaks with propriety and force. He who speaks as a heaven-inspired messenger, speaks evermore wisely and well. He speaks wisdom, and the meditation of his heart is understanding. His utterances are not crude and impulsive, but the result of holy meditation.

Ver. 4.—“*I will incline mine ear.*” This expression implies that his sentiments were not self-derived, not intuitional; they came to him from without; he listened to divine voices, and he heard them. “*To a parable.*” Literally, likeness or comparison, then any figurative topical expression. The parallel word here means an enigma, something hard to be understood. “*I will open my dark saying upon the harp.*” My enigma, I will give the solution of the problem in music. I will give my explanation, not only in a jubilant spirit, but in such forms of expression as shall fit them for instrumental music.

Ver. 5.—“*Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?*” “Why should I fear in days of evil (when) the iniquity of my oppressors (or supplanters) shall surround me?” The theme of the whole psalm is the negative proposition involved in this interrogation: viz., that the righteous has no cause to fear, even when surrounded by powerful and spiteful enemies. “‘Days of evil,’ i.e. of misfortune or distress. The word translated oppressors, commonly means heels; but as this yields no good sense here, it may be taken as a verbal noun, meaning either treaders, trample, oppressors, or supplanters, traitors,” in a sense akin to which the verbal root is used, Gen. xxvii. 35; Hos. xii. 4. In either case it is clearly a description of his enemies as practising violence or fraud against him.”—*Alexander*. This verse contains the thesis of the whole psalm, which amounts to this,—*the godly have no good reason for dreading adversities or foes.*

Ver. 6.—“*They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches.*” If the word “that” were taken out, the sense of the writer would appear much more clear. He seems to say, they, i.e. his supplanters, his treacherous foes, referred to in the previous verse, boast themselves of their riches and trust in their wealth.

Ver. 7.—“*None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.*” “A man is not able by any means to redeem his brother.”—*Delitzsch*. “A brother in riches and ungodliness (Gen. xlix. 5). In the Hebrew order, ‘A brother can no one redeeming redeem.’ The doubled expression redeeming redeem emphasizes the idea of redemption as the chief concern, the standard of value, by which all things, wealth included, are to be tested, whether they who have them ought to boast over those who have not, or the latter fear the former on account of them.”—*Fausset*.

Ver. 8.—“*For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.*” The word “soul” here does not mean merely the spiritual part of human nature, but human life. The idea seems to be, that human life is too costly a thing for any money to procure its continuance; it ceases for ever, that is, whatever money you spend to perpetuate it, the expenditure is useless. *Delitzsch's* translation hits off

the idea, "Too costly is the redemption of their soul, they must give it up for ever."

Ver. 9.—"*That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.*"

The same idea is here carried out and more fully expressed. Turn the round earth into gold and diamonds, and the whole would be insufficient to deliver one life from the grave.

Ver. 10.—"*For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.*" The allusion is to the rich; and it means, that whether they are wise or foolish and brutish, their wealth, however enormous, cannot prevent them from going down to the grave.

Ver. 11.—"*Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names.*" The idea of the verse is clear enough, it is this,—that those rich fools live and act upon the thought that their earthly prosperity is to be perpetual.

Ver. 12.—"*Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish.*" Nevertheless it matters not what the amount of wealth or fame man attains, he must die and pass away—die like the beasts that perish.

Ver. 13.—"*This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.*" "This is their course; such is their folly; and yet after them men will delight in what they say. Their way or course means not only their behaviour, but their fate or destiny."—*Alexander*. Notwithstanding the folly of those fools who imagine they can give permanency to their life and their fame, others succeed them who pursue the same infatuated course. Selah, ponder this.

Ver. 14.—"*Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them.*" "Like dumb driven cattle" they go down to the grave and rot, thus lose all their worldly beauty, grandeur, and also their magnificent dwelling. Thus it is night with them, black, starless, hopeless night. "*The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning.*" Is there a reference here to the resurrection morning? We know not. The general idea however is, that whilst the wicked, however wealthy, will go down into darkness, the upright, however poor, will ascend into light. There is a destined change in their relative position.

Ver. 15.—"*But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for He shall receive me. Selah.*" Perhaps the writer means this:—Although no wealth can deliver a wicked man from the power of the grave, God can do it, and will do it for me. "Elohim will deliver my soul from Hades, for He will take me up." *Delitzsch*. Selah, ponder this. Here is sublime confidence in God under trial.

Ver. 16.—"*Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased.*" "Here begins the application or practical conclusion of the foregoing meditation. It is marked by a change of form, the Psalmist now is no longer speaking of himself, but to himself!

or to another, as the person most directly interested in his subject. See a similar transition in Psalm xxxii. 8, and compare the parental or authoritative tone of the address with that in Psalm xxxiv. 11.—*Alexander*. The idea is, Dread not the power which any man can wield on account of his wealth, for the simple reason stated in the next verse.

Ver. 17.—“*For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him.*” Wealth gives man an enormous power for evil, but when he dies it is gone: he leaves all behind him. His glory, that is, all the brilliant concomitants of wealth, he leaves behind, they do not descend after him.

Ver. 18.—“*Though while he lived he blessed his soul: and men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.*” The ungodly rich man here blessed his soul, regarded his life as pre-eminently happy; his contemporaries thought more of him because of his good fortune, “men will praise thee when thou doest good to thyself.” How true this! Men worship success.

Ver. 19.—“*He shall go to the generation of his fathers.*” To be gathered to one’s own people, “his fathers,” is a common expression in the Old Testament to symbolize death (Gen. xxx. 18; xxxv. 29; xlix. 29; Num. xx. 24-26; xxvii. 13; xxxi. 2; Deut. xxxii. 50; Judges ii. 10). Death unites all in the embrace of the old mother earth. “*They shall never see light.*” Never any more see the light of this world or walk among the living.

Ver. 20.—“*Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.*” The idea here is, that the man, in all the glory of his wealth, who has no spiritual intelligence, that is, “understandeth not” the great realities of being as he ought to understand them, is “like the beasts that perish.” The writer of this psalm, when thus describing the end of the wicked as similar to that of the beast, therein implies that the righteous will have a different destiny.

ARGUMENT.—This psalm consists of a short introductory stanza, inviting general attention to the subjects, verses 1-4, followed by two longer stanzas, the close of which is marked by the recurrence of a burden or refrain, ver. 12 and 20. In the first of these two divisions the prominent idea is the fallacy of all merely secular advantages and hopes, ver. 5-12. In the other, these advantages and hopes are directly contrasted with those of the believer, verses 13-20.

(To be continued.)

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Job.

The Book of Job is one of the grandest sections of Divine Scripture. It has never yet, to our knowledge, been treated in a purely Homiletic method for Homiletic ends. Besides many learned expositions on the book found in our general commentaries, we have special exegetical volumes of good scholarly and critical worth; such as Drs. Barnes, Wemyss, Mason Goode, Noyes Lee, Delitzsch, and Herman Hedwick Bernard: the last is in every way a masterly production. For us, therefore, to go into philology and verbal criticism, when such admirable works are available to all students, would be superfluous, if not presumption. Ambiguous terms, when they occur, we shall of course explain, and occasionally suggest an improved rendering; but our work will be chiefly, if not entirely, Homiletic. We shall essay to bring out from the grand old words those Divine verities which are true and vital to man as man in all lands and ages. These truths we shall frame in as order as philosophic and suggestive as our best powers will enable us to do; and this in order to help the earnest preachers of God's Holy Word.

Subject: A Blessed Conscience, a Sublime Reflection, and a Moral Sadness.

"My foot hath held His steps," etc.—Job xxiii. 11-17.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS: Ver. 11.—"*My foot hath held His steps.*" The law is, in the Old Testament poetry, regarded as a "way" in which God proceeds as a guide. Hence when Job said he had "held His steps," he means that he had trod in the footsteps of his guide. He means, I have obeyed all His precepts. "*His way have I kept, and not declined.*" The same idea more fully expressed. He means, I have persevered in obedience. This he more fully expresses in the next verse.

Ver. 12.—"*Neither have I gone back from the commandment of His lips.*" My obedience was not occasional, but constant. "*I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.*" "Esteemed" rather laid up; viz., as a treasure found (Matt. xiii. 44; Ps. cxix. 11), alluding to the words of Eliphaz (ch. xxii. 23). There was no need to tell me so; I have done so already (Jer. xv. 16). 'Necessary' the appointed portion of food, as in Prov. xxx. 8. Umbreit and Maurer translate, 'More than my law; my own will, in antithesis to the words of His mouth' (John vi. 38). How difficult it is for man to prefer God's laws to those of his own will. Probably under the general term 'what is appointed to be' (the same Hebrew is in ver. 14), all that ministers to the appetites of the body and carnal will is included."—Fausset.

Ver. 13.—"*But He is in one mind, and who can turn Him? and what His soul desireth, even that He doeth.*" "Yet He remaineth by one thing and who can turn Him? and He accomplisheth what His soul desireth."—Delitzsch. The idea is, He has a purpose, and that purpose is unchangeable.

Ver. 14.—"*For He performeth the thing that is appointed for me; and many such things are with Him.*" "Surely He will complete what He

has decreed for me." Many such afflictions He has purposed for me, and nothing can change that purpose.

Ver. 15.—"*Therefore am I troubled at His presence: when I consider, I am afraid of Him.*" The thought that He has determined to afflict me and His determination cannot be altered, fills me with apprehension, "I am afraid of Him."

Ver. 16.—"*For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me.*" "But it is God Himself who hath made my heart faint, yea the Almighty it is who hath confounded me. He it is who, by sending on me calamity after calamity, every one more grievous than the last—by depriving me, first of my property, then of my children, and finally of my health—has made me so faint-hearted as to dread even greater evils than those I have already seen."—*Dr. Bernard.*

Ver. 17.—"*Because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath He covered the darkness from my face.*" This clause seems to express Job's regret that he had not been cut off, taken away from the world, before these dire calamities fell on him.

HOMILETICS.—Homiletically these words present three subjects for thought,—a *blessed consciousness*, a *sublime reflection*, and a *moral sadness*. Here we have—

I. A BLESSED CONSCIOUSNESS. Job expresses a consciousness of two things.

First: *Obedience to God's precepts*. He felt his obedience to have been *unswerving*. "My foot hath held His steps." He had not only pursued the path of duty, but he had never turned aside. Every step he gave was in the footprints of his Guide. And not only was he conscious of his obedience being unswerving, but also *persevering*. "His way have I kept, and not declined; neither have I gone back from the commandment of His lips." He did not pause or retrograde, he pursued the path of obedience with all the regularity of life.

Secondly: *Appreciation of God's truth*. "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." What is more precious to man than his "necessary food"? It is the means of his subsistence, it is his life. But to a devout soul God's words are esteemed of greater value, "sweeter are they than honey and the honeycomb." But if instead of the word "food" we substitute "purpose" or "determination" (as some translators do), it may be asked, What is more precious to a man than his own leading determination or purpose? It is the spring of all his activities,

his spiritual life. But God's truth Job felt to be more precious even than this. What so valuable as God's word!

Such is the consciousness which Job here declares. If it was well founded (as we have reason to believe it was, for the Almighty Himself said he was an "upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed evil"), then what a blessed man was he! blessed despite of all the terrible calamities that befell him. Whatever anguish he experienced from the pangs of bereavement, the deprivations of adversity, the tortures of physical pain, he could experience no moral remorse while he possessed the smiles and succour of a good conscience towards God and man. One replied to unjust accusations thus, "I will rest henceforward in peace, in the house of my own conscience; and if I do any good deeds, it is no matter who knows them; if bad, knowing them myself, it is no matter from whom I hide them: they will be recorded before that Judge from whose presence I cannot flee. If all the world applaud me and He accuse me, their praise is in vain." Here we have—

II. A SUBLIME REFLECTION. "He is in one mind, and who can turn Him?" etc. The subject of the patriarch's reflection was the *purpose* of God. The great Maker and Master of the universe has a purpose. He does not act by necessity or caprice, but by an intelligent purpose. The patriarch seems to have had three ideas concerning this purpose.

First: It is *unalterable*. "He is in one mind." Why does He not change His purpose? Not because He is not *free*, but because His purpose is so perfect as to admit of no possible improvement. Man changes his purpose because he discovers it is impracticable, or otherwise defective. The purpose of God is absolutely perfect. The unalterableness of the Divine purpose is a theme for the most exultant thought. Any change in His purpose would be to the detriment of the universe.

"Who would have Thee change, O Lord?

For kinder never couldst Thou be;

Thy love is one great golden cord,

Binding the universe to Thee."

Another idea the patriarch seems to have concerning this purpose is—

Secondly: It is *efficient*. "What His soul desireth, even that He doeth." His purpose is not an abstract thought, but an ever operative force. It is the spring of all the forces and movements of the universe. What God decrees He does. No combination of creature force can frustrate the Divine plan. "What His soul desireth, even that He doeth." Another idea the patriarch seems to have concerning this purpose is—

Thirdly: It is *personal*. "For He performeth the thing that is appointed for *me*: and many such things are with Him." "Appointed for *me*." He has a purpose, not only in relation to the universe as a whole, but to every part of the whole; not only to communities, but to individuals. "*Me*." Wonderful is the thought that God has a purpose concerning my little life, conduct, and destiny.

Is not this a sublime subject for reflection; this unalterableness, efficiency, and speciality of the Divine purpose? Here we have—

III. A MORAL SADNESS. "Therefore am I troubled at His presence," etc. The effect of Job's reflections upon God was of a painful character. There seems to have come to him—

First: The feeling of *awe*. "I am afraid of Him." Not the fear of terror, but of profound veneration.

Secondly: The feeling of *weakness*. "God maketh my heart soft." He taketh away my strength. When a man thinketh on the greatness of God, what a sense of weakness comes over him! "When I consider the heavens," etc.

Thirdly: The feeling of *abnegation*. "Because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath He covered the darkness from my face." He would have been contented to have been swept away from the land of the living. He felt his life to be utterly worthless. When the soul has one glimpse of the majesty of God, how profoundly it feels its own utter insignificance! He loses all egotism; the *I* is engulfed in the Infinite.

Sermonic Glances at the Gospel of St. John.

As our purpose in the treatment of this Gospel is purely the development, in the briefest and most suggestive form, of Sermonic outlines, we must refer our readers to the following works for all critical inquiries into the author and authorship of the book, and also for any minute criticisms on difficult clauses. The works we shall especially consult are:—"Introduction to New Testament," by Bleek; "Commentary on John," by Tholuck; "Commentary on John," by Hengstenberg; "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels," by Westcott; "The Gospel History," by Ebrard; "Our Lord's Divinity," by Liddon; "St. John's Gospel," by Oesterlee; "Doctrine of the Person of Christ," by Dornier; Lange; etc., etc.

Subject: Christ as a Religious Teacher.

"Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. And early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came unto Him; and He sat down, and taught them."—JOHN viii. 1, 2.

EXPOSITION.—Concerning the genuineness of these and the following ten verses of this chapter, which is questioned by some and denied by others, we shall offer remarks in our next section. Meanwhile we shall confine our attention to these two verses.

Ver. 1.—"Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives." This ought to have been at the conclusion of the preceding chapter, following the words, "every man went unto his own house." Whilst the people had perhaps all their own houses to go to, and to them they retired, Jesus had no home, but retired to the "Mount of Olives." "This spot is a high hill rising quite abruptly from the valley of Jehoshaphat, and overlooking Jerusalem on the east side. At its foot between the city and the hill, is the brook Kedron; and on its slope, just across the brook, is the garden of Gethsemane. A winding footpath leads over the hill to Bethany on the other side. Our Lord seems to have passed the night on the Mount, perhaps at Bethany, where He was wont to resort, away from the bustle and turmoil of the crowded city, and from the malice of His enemies." From Luke xxi. 37 we learn that He was in the habit of spending the night on the Mount of Olives during His last residence at Jerusalem.

Ver. 2.—"And early in the morning." Ὠρθρον. "John writes elsewhere, πρωτα (xviii. 28); πρωτ (xx. 1); πρωτας (xxi. 4). Luke, on the contrary, ἑσπρον. It is to be observed here, however, that the term ἑσπρον denotes more precisely the dawn of morning, and that it is intended to denote just this time."—Lange. "He came again into the temple,

and all the people came unto Him; and He sat down, and taught them." Though He had been persecuted in the temple, as we find in the twenty-fifth verse of the preceding chapter, with undaunted courage He resorts thither again in order to teach the people.

HOMILETICS.—The two verses suggest to us a few thoughts concerning Christ as a religious Teacher.

I. He was **DEVOUTLY STUDIOUS**. It was from the solitudes of the Mount of Olives, where He had spent the previous night, that He goes to the temple to preach. Christ often had recourse to the loneliness of the hills for holy meditation and communion with the Eternal. There, in those profound silences where alone the voices of truth are heard, He poured out His thoughts upon the loftiest themes, and opened His heart to the influences of His great Father's loving mind. Devout solitude is the scene where the best preparation for public speaking can be attained. Without this, theological halls and elocutionary schools are worse than useless. It is only in solitude that a man can break the shells and reach the germs of the higher truths of life and destiny; and there only, by bathing them in the living current of devotion, can He make them so real to Himself as to make them realities to others. There are three things, as we have elsewhere said, that seem essential in order properly to preach the Gospel, and these can come only by seasons of devout solitude.

First: Self-formed conviction of Gospel truth. Gospel truth is our great instrument of social usefulness; that without which nothing else will be of any service. It is the "power of God unto salvation." But how is this to be wielded—by circulating copies of the Scripturē, or by a mere recitation of their contents, or by repeating what other people have said and written concerning those truths? All these may be and are useful in their way. But there is one thing indispensable, even to do these things effectively, and that is, self-formed convictions. Heaven has so far honoured our nature, that the Gospel, in order to obtain its grand victories, must pass as living beliefs through the soul of him that employs it. If we would effectually use the Gospel to help society, we must see, taste, and handle it with our own souls. The men who speak

the Gospel without such convictions,—and there are thousands of such amongst conventional preachers,—can never enrich the world. They are echoes of old voices ; what they say was in the world before they came into it. They are but mere channels through which old dogmas flow. But he who speaks what he believes and because he believes, speaks in some sense a new thing to the race. The doctrine comes from him instinct and warm with life. His individuality is impressed upon it. The world never had it in that exact form before, and never would have had it so had he not believed and spoken. Now, devout solitude is necessary to turn the Gospel that is in the Bible into this power of living conviction ; you can never get it elsewhere. Alone with God, you can search the Gospel to its foundation, and feel the congruity of its doctrines with your reason, its claims with your conscience, its provisions with your wants.

Secondly : *Unconquerable love for Gospel truth.* There is an immense practical opposition to Gospel truth in society. Men's pride, prejudice, pleasures, pursuits, and temporal interests are now, as ever, against it. It follows, therefore, that those who think more of the favour and applause of society than of the claims of truth, will not deal with it honestly, earnestly, and therefore successfully. The man only who loves truth more than popularity, fortune, or even life, can so use it as really and everlastingly to benefit mankind. In devout solitude you can cultivate this invincible attachment to truth, and you may be made to feel with Paul, who said—"I count all things, but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ."

Thirdly : *A living expression of Gospel truth.* We must be "living epistles." Our conduct must confirm and illumine the doctrines which our lips declare. Gospel sermons which are the expressions of life, are life-giving. Gospel truth must be embodied ; the word must become flesh ; it must be drawn out in living characters in all the phases of our every-day existence ; its spirit must be our inspiration, if we would make it instrumental for good. Now, for the production of such sermons, I am convinced there must be seasons of devout solitude ;

hours when, under the silent sunbeams of eternity, ideas run into emotions, circulate as a vital current through every vein of the soul, and form the very stamina of our being. It is said of Moses, "that the skin of his face shone while he talked with God." But in seasons of devout solitude our whole nature may grow luminous, and every phase of our character coruscate with the deep things of the Spirit. John the Baptist gained his invincible energy in the lonely wilderness; Paul prepared to be an apostle in the quiet of Arabia; and it was in the awful midnight solitude of Gethsemane that an angel from heaven came to strengthen Jesus for His work. It is beneath the earth's green mantle, in secret and silence amongst the roots, that the trees of the forest turn the elements of nature to their own advantage. And it is down in the quiet depths of spiritual realities, alone with God, that the soul only can turn this world to its use.

II. He was as a teacher **SUBLIMELY COURAGEOUS**. "He came again unto the temple." In that temple during the previous days, His life had been threatened. It is said that "they sought to take Him" (chap. vii. 30), that is, to kill Him. Officers had been despatched on the previous day from the Sanhedrim in order to seize Him. Yet, notwithstanding this malignant determination to destroy Him, with a noble daring He goes "early in the morning" of the next day "into the temple." You must distinguish this spirit of fearless daring from that which the world calls courage.

First: Brute courage is *dead to the sacredness of life*. The great bulk of the armies of Europe are formed of men who have gone into the profession (as it is called) without any deep conviction as to the sacredness of human life. They are men, for the most part, who hold life cheaply. Their courage is an animal and a mercenary thing. This was not the courage that Christ possessed and displayed. Deeply did He feel, and frequently did He teach, the sanctity of life. He came, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. "What," said He, "shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his life; and what shall a man give in exchange for his life?"

Secondly: Brute courage is *indifferent to the grand mission* of life. The man of brute valour is not penetrated, still less inspired, with the question, What is the grand object of my life? Wherefore was I sent into the world? Am I here to work out the great designs of my Maker, and to rise into angelhood; or to be a mere fighting machine? On the contrary, Christ's regard for the grand mission of His life made Him courageous. He held the will of His Father as a dearer thing to Him than His mortal existence. He came to bear witness to the truth; and to fulfil this work He dared the fury of His enemies, and willingly risked His own mortal life.

Thirdly: Brute courage is always *inspired by mere animal passion*. It is when the blood is up the man is daring. And the blood, what is it? The mere blood of the enraged tiger or the infuriated lion? When the blood cools down, the man's courage, such as it is, collapses. Not so with the valour of Christ. His courage was that of deep conviction of duty. His excitement was not animal, but spiritual—not malign or ambitious, but reverent and benign. "As Luther," Dr. D'Aubigné informs us, "drew near the door which was about to admit him into the presence of his judges (the Diet of Worms), he met a valiant knight, the celebrated George of Freundsberg, who, four years later, at the head of his German lansquenets, bent the knee with his soldiers on the field of Pavia, and then, charging to the left of the French army, drove it into the Ticino, and in a great measure decided the captivity of the King of France. The old general, seeing Luther pass, tapped him on the shoulder, and shaking his head, blanched in many battles, said kindly, 'Poor monk, poor monk! thou art now going to make a nobler stand than I or any other captain have ever made in the bloodiest of our battles. But if thy cause is just, and thou art sure of it, go forward in God's name and fear nothing. God will not forsake thee.' A noble tribute of respect paid by the courage of the sword to the courage of the mind."

Nothing is more necessary for a religious teacher than courage, for his mission is to strike hard against the prejudices,

the self-interests, the dishonesties, the cherished passions and sinful pursuits of the masses. No man without an invincible valour of soul can do the work of a religious teacher in this age. The popular preacher must, more or less, be cowardly conciliatory. The less force of conviction a preacher has, the more he is fitted for popularity. Dead fish flow with the stream; it requires living ones with much inner force to cut up against the current.

III. As a Teacher He was EARNESTLY DILIGENT. "Early in the morning." Elsewhere we are informed that He rose up "a great while before day." He did not indulge Himself in sleep. When sleep, which generally does its refreshing work in a few hours, had left Him, and the sun struck his rays upon the horizon, He was up at His great work. "I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is called day, for the night cometh in which no man can work."* Two things should make a teacher earnestly diligent,—

First: The *transcendent importance of his mission*. What has he to do? To enlighten and regenerate imperishable spirits that are in a morally ruinous condition. What is involved in the loss of one soul? Secondly: *The brevity of his life*. How short the time, even in the longest lived men, for the prosecution of this the greatest of all human undertakings! Oh that all preachers of the Holy Word were inspired with something of the earnestness of Christ's spirit! Then indeed they would be earnest in season and out of season, etc. No time would be wasted in sleep, in self-indulgence, or even in occupations that had not a salutary bearing on the great mission.

"Oh! let all the soul within you
For the truth's sake go abroad.
Strike! let every nerve and sinew
Tell on ages—tell for God."

IV. As a Teacher He was BEAUTIFULLY NATURAL. "He sat down and taught them." There was nothing stiff or official

* See a reading on early rising, "The Practical Philosopher," p. 458.

24 *Sermonic Glances at the Gospel of St. John.*

in Christ's manner of teaching. All was free, fresh, and elastic as nature. (1) He was natural in *attitude*. Modern rhetoric has rules to guide a public speaker as to his posture, how he should move his hand, point his finger, and roll his eyes. All such miserable directions are not only to the utmost degree unlike Christ, but degrading to the moral nature of the speaker, and detrimental to his oratoric influence. Let a man be charged with great thoughts, and those thoughts will throw his frame into the most befitting attitudes. (2) He was natural in *expression*. He attended to no classic rule of composition; the words and similes He employed were such as His thoughts ran into at first, and such as His hearers could well understand. To many modern preachers composition is everything. Words the most select and ornate, sentences the most polished and periods the most rounded, paragraphs the most finished and brilliant, they scrupulously regard. How unlike Christ! and what solemn trifling with Gospel truth! (3) He was natural in *tones*. The tones of His voice, we may rest assured, rose and fell according to the thoughts that occupied His soul. The voice of the modern teacher is often hideously artificial. Just so far as a speaker goes away from his nature, either in language, attitude, or tone, he loses self-respect, inward vigour, and social force. Ever should he be—

“Simple, grave, sincere;
In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain,
And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,
And natural in gesture; much impressed
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too. Affectionate in look
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty men.”

Germs of Thought.

Subject: Christian Life a Growth.

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—2 PET. iii. 18.

THESE are wise concluding words with which to close a Christian letter; they bring men to the Author of spiritual life, and they reveal the means by which it is to be nurtured. What is it to "grow in grace"? The question presses for an answer now, when abounding religiousness appears to teach that the people are simply to believe in a few commonplaces of Christianity, and float constantly in a calm atmosphere of changeless joy. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," wrote a man into whose quivering flesh the hand of his Redeemer had purposely inserted a "thorn," that he might not lose his sense of kinship with suffering men. The life-long pain which he was destined to endure, was sent to tone down the raptures of the revelation made to him, and thereby,—strange as it may appear,—help to keep him in a state of grace! The "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," of which Paul reminds the Corinthians, was, *the spirit of self-denying beneficence*, which led Him to "empty Himself of all but love," which directed the outflow of His compassion into innumerable rills, which everywhere carried life and irrigated spiritual wastes.

I. The heart must become rooted in living, Christ-like principles before it can "grow in grace." The truth must find the living nerve of a man's spirit, as the knife of the gardener *slips the shoot*, that it may *strike* when put into the soil. The living twig will grow, while the most sightly *stick* will rot. The untouched and unrepentant never can find the Saviour *from sin*, never graft upon Him by faith.

II. The Christian religion is to be cultivated. It is a scheme of hope and restoration, a "spirit of love and of a sound mind," in which men are to grow. Like true dignity, it

is the outcome of continued and costly training; not like jewellery, which is put on, and may be worn by the most vulgar. The task set us, if we have become "rooted in Christ," is to grow ourselves in God-likeness—in all goodness and in richness of nature—a work which ought to satisfy the most ambitious craving. Many Christians appear to be satisfied with much less. Like the limpet glued to its parent rock, though washed by the floods of plenty, it sticks there an insensate shell. As helps and privileges are given, it is expected to become stronger, more clear and mellow.

III. Due attention must be given to the law of spiritual development. Soils and circumstances differ, and the very best requires careful cultivation. Some are so poor and cold that, unless well drained and heated, they will produce nothing profitable. It is a man's supreme concern to see to it that he is steadily growing more Christ-like in thought and feeling; that he is transmuting, by the power of an inward life, the influences which touch him into holy nutriment and strength. To do this, some natures require the utmost vigilance and even the most unsparing pruning. Mere religious fastidiousness will not do; it may turn the surface, but cannot vitalize the root. Frail natures like ours possess a marvellous power. By yielding to lower instincts, we may wriggle as the grub, and change the most splendid opportunities into ministers of vengeance. A Nebuchadnezzar becomes a beast, and a Judas a devil.

IV. The law of growth works its purpose through changing seasons. The unfriendly winter of our trials is sent to serve a blessed purpose. Raked together in the end of his field and burned, we may see what the farmer does with his weeds; and God lights His fires that the peaceable fruits of righteousness may grow unhindered. To our faith in Christ we are to add the courage which works in a line with the Holy Spirit, as He leads us to cultivate nobleness of character. God helps us that we may help ourselves. "I will be as the dew unto Israel, and he shall grow as the lily." The silent heaven-influence gently falls upon the place beneath, and fruits and

flowers grow. Joseph's fortune was not the sudden, gourd-growth of a night; the principles of virtue which struck root in early life at home lived through, and perhaps needed, the wintering process of the dungeon, before they could properly unfold. It is possible to turn our very hindrances into helps.

V. The growing life will manifest itself. An increase of the spirit of reverent obedience and of inward power must belong to the heart whose emptiness has been filled by the satisfying spirit of Christ. The selfish cry, Give me, give me, is exchanged for the invitation of beneficence, "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye." The empty pitcher is now full, and still filling, and it runs over as a little fountain of blessing. It knows the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; it has been learning of Christ, digging into His thoughts, and is enlarged and growingly fruitful. *Humility* increases; as the plant roots downward, so grace deepens. *Conscience* becomes more true to Christ; it points to purity. As the ship's safety depends upon the needle's sensitivity, so does our growth upon a healthy conscience. *Love to God and man* increases, not only the glow of emotion, but the practical expression of it in the obedience of life. An enlightened Christian charity outgrows prejudice and party. Can Christ, who is "Immanuel, God with us," dwell in any high sense, in the heart which is not increasing in sympathy with Him? Can Christianity do any mighty works amongst us if we remain undeveloped Christians? He who commands suns and give seasons withholds no good thing from those that walk uprightly.

Leeds.

W. CURRIE.

SERMONIC NOTES ON THE VISIONS OF EZEKIEL.
No. XX.

Subject: The River of Life, an Emblem of Living
Christianity.

"Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the

south side of the altar. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto En-eglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt. And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine."—*Ezekiel*, xlvii. 1-12.

HAVING regarded the gigantic and complete Temple, described in the preceding chapters, as a symbol of the Kingdom of God, we now have to inquire what that strong, deep, life-giving, and health-restoring river is, which at first only trickles forth as a streamlet from under that Temple porch? In our study of this part of the vision, we may agree with many who have accepted a more literal interpretation of the Temple itself than we have. For surely none can insist that an actual stream of water is here intended. It has been wisely shown by Dr. Fairbairn, "that a natural river like this would of necessity be in contravention of the established laws of nature, and could only exist as a perpetual

miracle. Supposing that by some new adjustment of the land a stream might be made to rise upon Mount Zion, yet a stream feeding itself as described in the vision, and growing with such rapid strides is utterly at variance with the known laws of the material world. For it is to be observed that the increase here comes from no extraneous and incidental sources; it is all along the temple waters that form the river, and at last empty themselves into the sea, and yet from being at first but a small streamlet, these grow by self production in the space of little more than a mile into an unfordable river!" So that we are led to look for some other than a merely material influence proceeding from the Kingdom of God to bless those that are without. From the restored Temple rich blessing rolls forth to the outer world. Probably the vision of such higher influence as here predicted was to some extent fulfilled through the renewed national and religious prosperity that soon came to Israel; it was more largely fulfilled by the Advent of Christ and the sending forth of His Apostles, and will be completely fulfilled when His influence has blessed all mankind. Little more needs to be said about the primary meaning of the vision than is contained in a sentence of Dean Stanley: "How the outward form of that vision was left to pass away, how its inward spirit was fulfilled beyond all that Ezekiel could have dreamed, is the story reserved for the next epoch of the Jewish history, but is yet not dimly foreshadowed even in Ezekiel's own lifetime." Nor can we better approach the *universal and perpetual meaning* of this vision than under the guidance of one of the most suggestive of modern preachers, as he says, "And so the prophet continued to gaze in divine, sacred trance as the purpose of God unfolded itself. Time and space vanished out of his sight. He was blest with a vision of the future growing brighter, purer, and happier through the grace of God. He saw the divine idea manifesting itself anew in human nature, taking possession of the heart and life of the race, and acquiring over it an ever increasing power. Or, if he did not,—if the meaning of this

vision was partly hidden from himself,—if he ‘searched and inquired diligently’ what the Spirit of Christ which was in him could signify by a prophecy at once so mysterious and so glorious—it should move us to the deeper thankfulness to-day, that we are able to attach a meaning more precise probably in some respects than even the prophet himself could have assigned to that promise which is the sum and crown of the whole—which is not a mere metaphor or glancing similitude, but a most just and fruitful analogy, as true from first to last in the world of the soul as it is in the world of the senses—‘Everything shall live whither the river cometh.’” Now this life-giving and ever increasing stream of sacred influence proceeding from the very centre of the Kingdom of God, is surely “*Living Christianity*.” Not merely Christianity as a compendium of historic facts, or a system of religious creed, but Christianity in practice; the Christly life quickened in every man, woman, and child that possesses it by the Spirit of God, and so existing in every such person as to diffuse its life-giving restorative in the vast human world.

“O sacred stream of love,
Hast thou begun thy flow,
And from the hills above
Reached now the lands below?
Then, blessed by Thee, life's common field
Will corn and fruit and herbage yield.”

The visional river illustrates for us concerning *Living Christianity*,—

I. ITS ORIGIN. The “waters issued from near the threshold of the house.” The fountain, then, is in the holy place, the holy of holies. Ezekiel cannot completely trace it thither, for the entrance to the holy of holies is only allowed to the high priest. Joel and Zechariah agree with Ezekiel in declaring that this river of blessing issues from the sanctuary, John the Beloved is able to show us its very fountain-head, for he points to it as “proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” By this we are reminded that Christianity, as a system of truth, is not a human invention, but a divine

revelation. In it God has "bowed the Heavens and come down." But we are also reminded that Christianity, as a life in separate human lives, as a saving power for the individual and for the race, is also divinely given. Wherever there is Christly life, whether it be only the clear fresh streamlet in the child's heart, or the deep full tide in the heart of saint, apostle, or martyr, it has "issued from under the threshold of the house," it has "proceeded from the throne." Every such one is "born of God;" every such one utters with thanksgiving the adoration, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

II. ITS INCREASE. "Son of Man, hast thou seen it?" was the question put to the prophet by him who had the measuring line, and who, taking him beyond the temple grounds, had shown him the rapid deepening and widening of this mystic river — a deepening and widening by which the streamlet that had not been up to his ankles, became a river that could not be passed over. This progress of Christianity is *true of the race*. What figure could more beautifully declare that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"? The knowledge of the Lord is to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Beginning in a rill, and widening and deepening to a river, beginning as a mustard-seed and growing to a great tree, beginning as a little leaven that ferments the whole lump, Christianity, at first seen in the Babe in a manger, shall govern thrones and mould empires and redeem humanity. This progress of Christianity is *true of the individual*. Its wonderful power at first works in secret in the soul; there are a few holy thoughts, a few heavenward aspirations. But he who follows on to know the Lord has insight into deeper mysteries, and realizes rich experiences. Till at length, as before a river that he could not pass, he cries, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Unless there are signs of this progress in our experience, we may well question we have the water of life Christ has promised shall be in us.

III. ITS EFFECTS. There are two closely connected and yet

not identical attributes in this visional river that symbolize the influence of a living Christianity. (1) There is *vivifying power*. "Everything shall live whither the river cometh." There is prolific, exuberant life suggested here. For on one side and on the other are very many trees, and those not poor sickly striplings, but trees for food whose leaf shall not fade, whose fruit shall not fail; that shall bring forth fruit every month, fruit that shall be for food, while the very leaves are for healing. And then in the waters themselves there are vast shoals of fish—fish so abundant and so varied that though the fishermen have already taken great hauls, they throng the banks with their nets spread in preparation for new work and new successes. Those trees, in their perpetual fruitfulness, stand as symbols of godly men, who are "planted by these rivers of water." Those fish, in their vast number and variety, are symbols of the men whom the messengers of Christ, as "fishers of men," bring to the knowledge of His Gospel. And the prolific life is a symbol of the mental, the social, the spiritual life all may have who accept the teaching, receive the love of Him who says, "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly." (2) There is *restorative power*. The water of the river flows into the Dead Sea, and so heals its waves that fish can live there that were about to perish. What the vision teaches this river can do for that Dead sea, what the tree cast into the waters of Marah did in sweetening them, living Christianity accomplishes in the world. The world lying in wickedness is a Dead Sea, a Marah. Its corruption, its bitterness, shall yield, have yielded, to the pure, loving, hopeful, prayerful influence of Christly lives.

IV. ITS ABSENCE. As we read "the miry places and the marishes thereof that shall not be healed, they shall be given to salt," we are reminded of the *natural* fact that the height of water of a sea is different at different times, and that if the water subsides, salt morasses and marshes rise here and there that are cut off from connection with the main sea, and become first pestilential and loathsome, then dry and barren.

And by this natural fact we are warned of the *spiritual* fact, that where the waters of a living Christianity do not come there will be no life, no healing; and that sooner or later there will be the loathsome mire, the pestilential marsh, the salt and deadly morass. "He that believeth not the Son of God shall not see life." So was it with Capernaum, with Jerusalem; so will it be with every individual to whom Christ, the Fountain of Living Waters, has to say, "Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life." The explanation of every such human mire, morass, marsh, is, "Ye would not." The punishment and the ruin consists in being left to themselves, in cutting themselves off from the river of life whose waters quicken and heal, and spread all through the nations and all down the ages.

Bristol.

URIJAH R. THOMAS.

The Preacher's Finger-Post.

Subject: THE WORLD'S
GREATEST BLESSING, AND ITS
GREATEST EVIL.

"Lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."—1 Cor. i. 17.

Preliminary remarks of a most interesting and suggestive kind might be offered on the context. But we have only space here to notice the two things presented to us in the few words which we adopt as our text. Here we have—

I. The greatest BLESSING in the world—"the Cross of Christ." By "the Cross of Christ" the Apostle did not mean, of course, the timber on which Christ was crucified, or

any imitation of that in wood, brass, marble, gold, silver, or paint. He uses the word as a symbol, as we use the words Crown, Court, Bench, etc. He meant the eternal principles of which the cross of Christ was at once the effect, the evidence, and the expression: he meant, in one word, all that we mean by the Gospel. And this, we say, is the greatest blessing in the world to-day. The human world lives under a system of mercy, and mercy pours on it every hour blessings innumerable. But no blessing has come to it, has ever been found in it, or will

ever come to it, equal to the Cross, or the Gospel. Look at it, for example, in only three of its many aspects, and you will be impressed with its incomparable worth.

First: As a *revealer*. The chief value of the material universe is, that it reveals the spiritual and the eternal; but the Gospel reveals all that the material does of God and the universe with much greater fullness and effect. It presents the image of the invisible God. All true theological doctrine and ethical science come to us through the Cross. It is the moral light of the world.

Secondly: As an *educator*. That in human life which is the most successful in quickening, evolving, and strengthening all the powers of the human mind, is its chief blessing. The "Cross of Christ" has done this a thousand times more effectively than any other agency. Art, government, science, poetry, philosophy, owe infinitely more to it than to any other agent in the world. The Cross is to the human soul what the vernal sunbeam is to the seed; it penetrates, warms, quickens; and brings all its latent powers out to perfection.

Thirdly: As a *deliverer*. The Cross is more than a revealer or an educator, it is a deliverer. The human soul is condemned, diseased, enthralled; everywhere it groans under the sentence of its own

conscience. It languishes under a moral malady: it is fettered by lusts, prejudices, evil habits, and social influences: its deepest cry is, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" The Cross bears a pen to cancel the sentence, a balm to heal the wound, a weapon to break the fettering chain.

Such, and infinitely more, is the Cross. What would human life be without it? A voyage without a compass, chart, or star.

Here we have—

II. The greatest evil in the world. What is the evil? Making this Cross of "none effect." That is "none effect" so far as its grand mission is concerned. Some effect it must have; it will deepen the damnation where it does not save. "We are unto God a sweet savour," etc.

We offer three remarks concerning this tremendous evil.

First: It is *painfully manifest*. The fact is patent to all, that the Cross has not to any great extent in Christendom produced its true effect. Though it has been in the world for 1800 years, not one tenth of the human population know anything about it, and not one hundredth of those who know something of it, experience its true effect. Intellectually, socially, politically, it has confessedly done wonders for mankind; but

morally, how little ! How little genuine holiness, disinterested philanthropy, self-sacrificing devotion to truth and God, Christliness of life ! In all moral features, England is well-nigh as hideous as heathendom.*

Secondly : It is *easily explained*. How is it done ? The Apostle in this verse indicates one way in which it could be done, that is, by "wisdom of words," by which we understand him to mean gorgeous rhetoric. What is called the Church has done it ; that is, the assembly of men who profess to be its disciples, representatives, ministers, and promoters. The Church has done it (1) by its *theologies*. In its name it has propounded dogmas that have clashed with reason and outraged conscience. It has done so (2) by its *polity*. It has sanctioned wars, promoted priestcraft, established foul hierarchies, which have fattened on the ignorance and poverty of the people. It has done so (3) by its *spirit*. The spirit of the Church, as a rule, is in direct antagonism to the spirit of the Cross. The spirit of the Cross is self-sacrificing love, the spirit of the Church has been to a great extent that of selfish-

ness, greed, ambition, and oppression. Malrepresentation of Christ by the Church is the instrument that has made the Cross of "none effect."

Thirdly : It is *terribly criminal*. It is wonderful that man has the power thus to pervert Divine institutions and blessings ; but such perverting power he has, and he uses it every day even in natural things. He forges metals into weapons for murder, he turns breadcorn into liquids to damn the reasons and the souls of men. Wonderful power this ! and terrible is the crime for employing it in perverting the Cross of Christ. A greater crime than this you cannot conceive of. Were you to turn all bread into poison, make the flowing rivers pestiferous, quench the light of the sun, mantle the stars in sackcloth, you would not perpetrate an evil half so enormous as that of making the Cross of Christ of "none effect."

CONCLUSION : Two questions, (1) What is the spiritual influence of the Cross on us ? Has it crucified unto us the world, destroyed in us the worldly spirit—the spirit of practical atheism, materialism, and selfishness ? (2) What are we doing with the Cross ? Are we abusing it or rightly employing it ?

* See "Modern Christianity, a Civilized Heathenism." By the Author of "Fight at Europa's School."

Subject: THE MERCY OF CHRIST IN THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS.

"Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting."—1 Tim. i xvi.

From this passage we may draw the following truths.

I. That the MORAL CONVERSION OF MEN IS TO BE ASCRIBED TO THE MERCY OF CHRIST. Paul is speaking of his conversion, and says, "For this cause I obtained mercy." In the 13th verse he says, I was "before a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious (an insulter); but I obtained mercy." Conversion must be ascribed to Christ's mercy.

First: In contradistinction to the *efforts of the individual himself*. Every man should seek the conversion of his soul. This is his duty, this is necessary. He has no just reason for expecting the blessed change irrespective of his effort, hence he is called upon to return to the Lord, to repent, to be converted, etc. But however strenuous and proper his efforts, they of themselves do not effect the object. They are only instrumental, not efficient; they are the secondary, not the primary cause. Christ's free sovereign mercy is the cause. "By grace are ye saved," "Unto Him that loved us," etc.

Secondly: In contradistinction to the *ministry of others*. It is required that men should seek the conversion of their fellows. This is the especial work of ministers of the Gospel; they are to exhort, reprove, admonish, intreat, etc. But however earnest and Christly their efforts, they do not effect the work. Christ does it, "Of His mercy hath He saved us." This agrees with the deep consciousness and experience of every converted soul. Ask any saint in heaven or on earth, and he will say, "I obtained mercy." "The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant." This fact serves two purposes—(1) To encourage all human efforts put forth to effect the work of conversion. Whilst this mercy does not supersede human effort, it inspires, directs, and blesses it. It is free and ready to crown with success the humblest attempt. As the atmosphere in spring waits to bless the efforts of the husbandman, Christ's mercy waits to bless all labours put forth to effect the conversion of men. The fact serves (2) To inspire all redeemed spirits with the ecstasies of everlasting gratitude. Gratitude is happiness. Gratitude wakes, sustains, and heightens the harmonies of heaven. "Unto Him that loved us and washed us," etc. From this passage we observe—

II. That the MERCY OF CHRIST IS EQUAL TO THE CONVERSION OF THE GREATEST SINNER. In the previous verse Paul calls himself the "chief of sinners." As he spoke from inspiration we must regard this estimate of himself as a true one, and suppose that no greater sinner ever lived. We are told that he made "havoc of the Church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison." This is what Luke said about him. And he says of himself, "Beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God and wasted it." And again he says, "I punished them oft, in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme, and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." Notwithstanding this, the mercy of Christ reached him. See an account of the appearance of Christ to him in Acts xx. 11-18. Christ's mercy, then, is equal to the conversion of even the greatest sinner. No one is too polluted for Him to cleanse, too diseased for Him to heal, too guilty for Him to pardon, too benighted for Him to enlighten, too enslaved for Him to liberate. "He is able to save to the uttermost," etc. His mercy is as vast as the heavens that encircle us, as boundless as the ocean, as free as the light

of heaven and the flowing air. From this passage we observe,—

III. That the GREATER THE SINNER CONVERTED, THE MORE GLORIOUS THE MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST'S MERCY. "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering." The more difficult the gulf to span, the more the genius of the engineer is displayed in the constructed bridge that answers the end. The more complicated and serious the disease of the patient, the more the skill and the science of the physician is displayed that restores him to health. In like manner, the greater the sinner converted; the more of the mercy of Christ is revealed. Mercy has its degrees. Mercy longsuffering, mercy intreating, mercy forgiving, and mercy forgiving the greatest sinner, is mercy in its highest manifestation.

IV. That the more glorious the manifestation of Christ's mercy, the more BENEFICENT ITS INFLUENCE ON COMING AGES. "For a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." Paul regarded himself as standing before the eyes of all coming generations as a witness to the mercy of Christ. He felt that the Lord had dealt with him as a king of a rebellious city who had released the leader

of the insurrection, as a physician in a hospital who had cured the most hopeless patient; so that henceforth no one guilty or diseased need despair.

Subject: GOD'S INCOMPREHENSIBLE GREATNESS ILLUSTRATED BY LITTLE THINGS.

"Behold, God is great, and we know Him not; neither can the number of His years be searched out. For He maketh small the drops of water."—JOB xxxvi. 26, 27.

These words suggest two thoughts concerning God's greatness,—

I. MAN CANNOT COMPREHEND IT. "God is great, and we know Him not; neither can the number of His years be searched out."

First: Man cannot comprehend His *nature*. "God is great, and we know Him not." Great in Himself. All His attributes transcend our understanding. The word God stands for infinite mystery. An ocean that has no limits, fathomless and unbounded.

"Thy nature is the mystery
In which all thoughts are lost,
Archangels wonder at Thee
Through heaven's unnumbered host;
Unbounded is Thy essence.
All space is full of Thee,
And 'tis Thy blessed presence
That sums immensity."

Who is like unto Thee, O Lord? No one in the universe. Sublimely unique, the matchless and the measureless. "Touching the Al-

mighty we cannot find Him out."

Secondly: Man cannot comprehend His *history*. "Neither can the number of His years be searched out." How old are the mountains? They are called everlasting; but before the mountains were brought forth He was. How old are the heavens? No science has yet been able to compute their age: but "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the work of Thy hand." He inhabiteth eternity. Who can comprehend this?

"The drops that swell the ocean,
The sands that girt the shore,
To measure His duration,
Their numbers have no power."

In the presence of His greatness, (1) all the glories of mankind dwindle into insignificance. What are all the things that men call great among themselves,—crowns, thrones, sceptres, equipages,—compared to His greatness? More contemptible far than the pyrotechnic flashes in the presence of the splendour of the starry heavens. In the presence of His greatness, (2) with what profound reverence should we ever think and speak of Him. When Isaiah in vision saw "the Lord high and lifted up, and His train filling the temple," he cried out "Woe is me!" And when Christ in His glory appeared to John in Patmos, he

says, "When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as if dead." The thought of God's greatness tends to humble, to quicken, to sanctify, and to solemnize.

These words suggest another thought concerning God's greatness:—

II. LITTLE THINGS ILLUSTRATE IT. "For He maketh small the drops of water;" or, as some render it, "He draweth up the drops of water." Elihu seems to connect God's greatness with His attention to the drops of water. Men are prone to think of God—when they think at all of Him—only in connection with the great and the awful. They see Him in the flash of lightning, not in the sunbeam, hear Him in the thunder, not in the whispering air. Ever should we remember that great and small are but relative terms; what is great to one being, is small to another. To God there is nothing small or great. And ever should we remember also, that God has as much connection with what we consider small as with the great.

First: The greatness of His wisdom is seen in the small. Take the microscope and examine life in its minutest form, and what wonderful skill you discover in the organization: as much wisdom as the telescope will show you amongst the rolling worlds of space.

Secondly: The greatness of His goodness is seen in the small. The smallest sentient creatures are endowed with desires and capacities for enjoyment; and for their pleasure ample provision has been made. "He openeth His hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing."

Thirdly: The greatness of His taste is seen in the small. Take the wing of the smallest insect, or the smallest grain of ore, and what exquisite forms and what beautiful combinations of colour. You are perhaps more impressed with the sense of beauty than when you survey the landscape. God is the Fountain of beauty, and the streams are manifest in those departments of life that are hidden from the unaided eye.

Fourthly: The greatness of His power is seen in the small. It is by the little things that He does His wonderful works. It is by the little drops of water that He draws up that He makes the clouds that fertilize the earth, it is by the sunbeam that He quickens nature, by the insects that He builds up islands, by atoms that He fabricates globes. It is so in the human world. By one human thought, or by the agency of an obscure man, or by what appears to all some trivial occurrence, He often effects revolutions in kingdoms. Indeed, that which He has

introduced in order to effect the moral restoration of humanity is represented as a seed which is the least of all seeds. Let us not despise the little. Truly great men show their greatness more in the trivial acts of daily life than in those dashing deeds that make the nations stare.

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Subject: THE GENUINE CHRISTIAN.

"My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." — **PHIL. iv. 19.**

These words suggest a few thoughts in relation to the genuine Christian.

I. HIS NEEDS ARE GREAT. "All your needs." His *physical* needs are great. Of all the creatures that come to life, he has the greater number of natural wants. His *social* needs are great. From the dawn of his life he requires the friendly hand of social sympathy. His deepest craving is for social love; he could not live or grow without it. His *mental* needs are great. His mind could devour the libraries of the world, and yet crave for more. His *spiritual* needs are great. He needs knowledge, reconciliation to God, assimilation to the Divine image, etc. Spiritually, the more a man knows, the deeper his craving for knowledge, the farther advanced in goodness, the

stronger and more intense the desire to reach higher, etc., etc.

II. HIS SUPPLIES ARE ABUNDANT. "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory." The provisions that God has made for genuine Christians are adaptive, fully satisfying, unexhausted, and inexhaustible. We may well, therefore, take up the 23rd psalm, and sing "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." He is, indeed, a sun and shield; He will give grace and glory, and no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.

Whatever you want is with Him in abundance to supply.

This fact—

First: *Affords ample grounds for unbounded confidence.* "Take no anxious thought for the morrow." "Be careful for nothing, but in everything with prayer and thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and He will sustain thee."

This fact—

Secondly: *Suggests a glorious future for the good.* The soul needing, and God supplying, perpetual receptivity and perennial supplies, this is the future; the ever hungry, ever widening soul drinking in from almighty love all needful and satisfying supplies,—this is heaven.

III. HIS HELPER IS SUFFICIENT.

CIENT. "By Christ Jesus." God may and does supply our physical and, to some extent, our intellectual and social needs by nature; but our spiritual needs—which are the most urgent and imperative—He supplies only by Christ Jesus. He does not supply the needs of the human soul by legislation, by science, by art, or by philosophy, but by Jesus Christ. Jesus is the minister to the soul. He is the Samaritan, to bind up its wounds; He is the Guide to conduct it safely through its dreary pilgrimage; He is the Shepherd, to guard it from dangers, appease its hunger, and to lead it into pastures of inexhaustible supplies.

**Subject: THE LEADING FOE
AND THE LEADING FRIEND OF
HUMANITY.**

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."—Luke xii. 31, 32.

In Series III., vol. iii., page 289, there will be found a sketch from our pen on these words. But as the passage is a very striking and suggestive one, and another sermonic plan has struck us, we need offer no apology for bringing forward the subject a second time.

We infer from it two great facts,—

I. That man has in the MORAL SPHERE OF HIS BEING A GREAT LEADING FOE AND A GREAT LEADING FRIEND. The one is Satan, and the other is Christ. We learn from the words,—

First: That both are *superhuman*. The various accounts which the Bible gives us of the being here called Satan, assure us that he is superhuman in intelligence, skill, power, activity, and influence. He is the prince of the power of the air; he leads man captive at his will. Christ is confessedly superhuman, though He was subject to the ordinary laws of humanity; yet the circumstances of His birth, the wonders that His mighty hand performed, and the extraordinary phenomena connected with His death, demonstrate that He had an existence transcending the human. Man's greatest Friend, then and his greatest foe are both superhuman, both above the reach and span of our nature.

Secondly: That both are *profoundly interested in individual men*. Here we find Satan setting his heart on Simon Peter, a poor fisherman. Satan has a heart. He is not a being of cold, sheer intellect, for he "desired to have" Peter. Christ's heart also is on Peter. Wonderful this,—these two great super-

human beings are not only interested in the race, the masses, generations, nations, and communities, but in individual men. One lonely soul attracts them. What a wonderful existent the human soul must be; though we may think but little of it, it is an object of concern to the greatest beings in the universe.

We infer,—

II. THAT MAN'S LEADING FRIEND IS GREATER THAN HIS LEADING FOE. For illustration of this observe:—

First: *That He understands the foe, the foe does not understand Him.* Christ knew Satan, knew his heart, read him through and through, knew all his desires and purposes concerning Peter. Christ not only knows what is in man, but knows what is in the devil, what is in the fiends, He reads hell. But the devil does not know Him. He knows something of His outward history, something of His grand purpose; but he cannot comprehend His existence, still less can he read the thoughts of His heart. Satan is no mystery to Christ, He knows all about him; but Christ is the mystery of mysteries to Satan.

Observe,—

Secondly: *That His purpose is to preserve, Satan's is to destroy.* Satan's idea was, (1) To annihilate the faith of Simon. It was to shake his

confidence in Christ, win him over to himself, and thus effect his utter ruin. Destroy the faith of a soul in truth and God, and that soul is lost—lost to virtue, to peace, to heaven, to God. The purpose of Christ is to preserve this faith. "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." (2) To annihilate the usefulness of Simon. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." When thou art converted, when thy weak, shaken, tottering faith has been established, then "strengthen thy brethren." Seek to establish their hearts in the truth, and so render their moral purposes for good invincible. Peter did this nobly, as we find in the Acts of the Apostles. The work of destruction is a very poor work. The meanest creature can do it, an insect may kill the lion. But the work of preservation is divine. God alone can restore.

Thirdly: *That He has the Highest Helper.* "I have prayed for thee." The Infinite God was with Christ, and to Him He looks for co-operation. Satan has no God with him. God is against him. He has no one to pray to.

Subject: CONTRAST BETWEEN THIS LIFE AND THE LIFE TO COME.

"And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this

world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."—LUKE xx. 34-36.

These words are part of the dispute which Christ had with the Sadducees concerning matrimony in the resurrection. For remarks on the narrative generally, see "*Genius of the Gospel*," p. 572. We merely take the words at present to point out the contrast between *the good man's future world and his present one*. The existence of a future world for him is here taught by Christ. He says, "they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world,"—that is, the great world into which good men enter after their departure from this life. The contrast between the two worlds, as here indicated by Christ, includes four things:—

I. There is no MARRIAGE OBSERVANCE there. "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage." Here men marry "and are given in marriage." From the beginning it has been so. The connubial instinct is one of the great mainsprings keep-

ing the wheels of society in perpetual motion. But in the other world, we are here taught, this ordinance has no existence. The social love there is sublimated, it is purely spiritual. All spirits there enter into the closest social and family relationships by doing the will of their Father who is in heaven.

II. There is no WORTHLESS CHARACTER there. All there are "accounted worthy." Men are brought into this world not on account of their worthiness, nor are they continued because they are worthy of it; but in that world all the denizens are "accounted worthy" of the place. This world is populated with men not worthy of it.

III. There is no GROSS ORGANIZATION there. Here we live in bodies of clay, subject to the same laws as those of all irrational life; but in that world all are the "children of the resurrection." For a description of the resurrection body, see 1 Cor. xv. 42-44. All human bodies there are fashioned, made like unto the glorious body of Jesus Christ. No hunger, no thirst, no gross impulses and lusts.

IV. There is no MORTALITY there. "Neither can they die any more." From Adam to Moses, from Moses to Christ, and from Christ to this hour, and so on to the end of the world, all men die.

But there "neither can they die." Why can they not? Not because God cannot annihilate, not because they are essentially immortal. This would make them independent of God. But because the Infinite has purposed they shall live for ever.

V. There is no MORAL INFERIORITY there. "They are equal unto the angels." Equal, not perhaps in intellectual might and attainment, but in freeness from sin, as free as angels from all carnalities. How pure are the angels? They are called holy angels, etc.

Seeds of Sermons from the Minor Prophets.

If the Bible as a whole is inspired, it is of vast importance that all its Divine ideas should be brought to bear upon the living world of men. Though the pulpit is the organ Divinely intended for this work, it has been doing it hitherto in a miserably partial and restricted method. It selects isolated passages, and leaves whole chapters and books for the most part untouched. Its conduct to the Minor Prophets may be taken as a case in point. How seldom are they resorted to for texts! and yet they abound with splendid passages throbbing with Divine ideas. It is our purpose to go through this section of the Holy Word; selecting, however, only such verses in each chapter and book as seem the most suggestive of truths of the most vital interest and universal application.

Having passed rapidly through Hosea and Joel, two of the Minor Prophets, we come now to Amos. He, we are informed, was a native of Tekoa, a small region in the tribe of Judah, about twelve miles south-east of Jerusalem. Nothing is known of his parents. He evidently belonged to the humbler class of life, and pursued the occupation of the humble shepherd. From his flock he was divinely called to the high office of prophet; and though himself of the tribe of Judah, his mission was to Israel. He was sent to Bethel, into the kingdom of the ten tribes. He commenced his ministry in the reign of Uzziah, between 810 and 783 B.C., and therefore laboured about the same time as Hosea. In his time idolatry, with its concomitant evils and immoralities of every description, reigned with uncontrolled sway amongst the Israelites, and against these evils he hurled his denunciations. The book has been divided into three parts: "First, sentences pronounced against the Syrians, the Philistines, the Phœnicians, the Edomites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Jews, and the Israelites, chapters i. and ii. Second, special discourses delivered against Israel, chapters iii. to vi. Third, visions, partly of a consolatory and partly of a comminatory nature, in which reference is had both to the times that were to pass over the ten tribes previous to the coming of the Messiah, and to what was to take place under His reign, chapters vii. to ix. His style is marked by splendor, elegance, energy, and fulness. His images are mostly original, and taken from the natural scenery with which he was familiar.

No. CVII.

Subject: THE RESTORATION OF THE TRUE MORAL THEOCRACY.

"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I

will build it as in the days of old: that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes

seed; and the
drop sweet wine,
shall melt. And I
captivity of my shall
and they shall inhabit
and I shall plant vine-
thereof; and I
and, up

passed away; but it was sym-
bolic: it was the emblem of
a higher theocracy, that is to be
established, not over the Jews
merely, but over the Gentiles
and over the whole world, it was
to stand for ever. We shall use
these words as an illustration
of this theocratic government.
Four thoughts are suggested
concerning it.

I. IT ROSE FROM THE HUMBLEST
CONDITION. "In that day I will
raise up the tabernacle of David
that is fallen." "The fallen
of David."—*Delitzsch*. Not

magnificent palace of David
on the monarch built for
himself on Mount Zion (1 Sam.
v. 11). "It is striking that
Amos, prophesying in Israel,
closes with a promise, not to the
ten tribes primarily, but to the
royal house of David, and to
Israel only through its restora-
tion. Strange comment on
human greatness, that the royal
line was not to be employed in
the salvation of the world until
it was fallen. The royal palace
had to become the hut of Naza-
reth ere the Redeemer of the
world could be born, whose glory
and kingdom were not of this
world. . . . Who came to
take from us nothing but our
nature, that He might sanctify
it, our misery that he might
bear it for us."—*Pusey*. Ay,
this true moral theocracy had
in truth a humble origin! Its
Founder, who was He? The
son of a poor Jewish peasant,
who commenced His life in a
stable. Its first apostles, who
were they? They were amongst
the poorest of the poor. In its
origin, indeed, its symbols are
the little stone, the grain of
mustard-seed, and the few par-
ticles of leaven.

that
judgment
sinful king-
the sinners of the
Israel are destroyed.
Israelites," says Dr. Hen-
erson, "now disappear from
the scene, in order to give place
to a brief and prominent exhibi-
tion of the restoration of the
Jews from their repressed con-
dition during their anticipated
captivity in Babylon." The
apostle James, at the first eccle-
siastical council at Jerusalem,
quotes this prophecy, *—not,
however, its identical phrase-
ology, but its general meaning,—
and applies it to the establish-
ment of Christ's kingdom in the
world by the admission of the
Gentiles into it. The old He-
brew world was for ages gov-
erned by a theocracy. God was
their king. He had under Him
and by His appointment human
rulers and other functionaries;
but they were simply His in-
struments and He was their king.
That form of government has

II. HEATHENS ARE SUBJECT TO ITS AUTHORITY. "That they may possess the remnant of Edom and of all the heathen which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this." The old theocracy was confined to the Jews; this one, this moral theocracy, is to extend to the heathen. Even Edom,—the old and inveterate foe of the theocratic people, who may be regarded as the representative of the whole heathen world,—is to be subjected to it. It shall "inherit the Gentiles." It is to have the heathen for its inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for its possession. The Bible assures us, in language most explicit and of frequent occurrence, that the time will come when from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same His name,—that is the name of this great moral King, Christ,—shall be great among the Gentiles. Or, in the language of Daniel, "When the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him."

III. ABUNDANT MATERIAL PROVISIONS WILL ATTEND IT. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt." "The metaphorical language here employed is at once in the highest degree bold and pleasing. The Hebrews were accustomed to construct terraces on the sides

of the mountains and other elevations, on which they planted vines. Of this fact the prophet avails himself, and represents the immense abundance of the produce to be such that the eminences themselves would appear to be converted into the juice of the grape." Just as this moral theocracy extends, pauperism will vanish. With the kingdom of God and His righteousness all necessary material good comes. Godliness is profitable unto all things. Let this theocracy, which means the reign in human hearts of Christliness, extend, and the earth "shall yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us."

IV. LOST PRIVILEGES ARE RESTORED AS IT ADVANCES. "I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel. And they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens and eat the fruit of them." Three blessings, which man has lost through depravity, are here indicated. First: *Freedom*. "I will bring again the captivity," or rather, I will reverse the captivity, give them liberty. Man in a state of depravity is a slave, a slave to lust, worldliness, etc., etc. This moral theocracy insures freedom to all its subjects. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Secondly: *Prosperity*. "Shall build the desolate cities and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof." One of the sad evils connected with man's fallen depravity is, that he does not reap the reward of his labours.

He builds cities and plants vineyards and makes gardens for others. Through the reign of social injustice he is prevented from enjoying the produce of his honest labours. Under this theocracy it will not be so. What a man produces he will hold and enjoy as his own. Thirdly: *Settledness*. "I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God." Unregenerate man has ever been restless, homeless, unsettled. He stands not on a rock, but rather on planks floating on surging waters; he is never at rest. All the subjects of the true theocracy are established. "God is their refuge and strength."

CONCLUSION: Let us have faith in this predicted future of the world. This faith can alone sustain us in our arduous work; this faith has ever been the nerve of all the great men who have toiled for the world's good.

"Poet and seer that question caught
Above the din of life's fears and
frots ;
It marched with letters, it toiled
with thought,
Through schools and creeds
which the earth forgets.
And statesmen trifle and priests
deceive,
And traders barter our world
away ;
Yet hearts to the golden promise
cleave,
And still at times 'Is it come ?
they say."

"The days of the nations bear no
trace
Of all the sunshine so far fore-
told ;
The cannon speaks in the teach-
er's place,
The age is weary with work
and gold ;
And high hopes wither, and
memories wane,
On hearth and altars the fires
are dead ;
But that brave faith hath not
lived in vain,
And this is all that our watcher
said."

Frances Brown.

OBADIAH.

If the Bible as a whole is inspired, it is of vast importance that all its Divine ideas should be brought to bear upon the living world of men. Though the pulpit is the organ Divinely intended for this work, it has been doing it hitherto in a miserably partial and restricted method. It selects isolated passages, and leaves whole chapters and books for the most part untouched. Its conduct to the Minor Prophets may be taken as a case in point. How seldom are they resorted to for texts! and yet they abound with splendid passages throbbing with Divine ideas. It is our purpose to go through this section of the Holy Word; selecting, however, only such verses in each chapter and book as seem the most suggestive of truths of the most vital interest and universal application.

Having passed rapidly through Hosea, Joel, and Amos, we come now to OBADIAH. Of the history of Obadiah we literally know nothing. His name, which signifies Worshipper of Jehovah, and his short prophecy afford the only information concerning him. From verses 11 to 14, which undoubtedly contain an allusion to the crucifixion of the Edomites over the capture and plunder of Jerusalem, we may with some confidence infer that he flourished after the capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. In all probability he must have lived near the time of Jeremiah; and indeed there is almost a verbal agreement between his utterance in verses 1 to 8 and those contained in Jeremiah xlix. If we suppose his prophecy was delivered between the year B.C. 588, when Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldeans, and the termination of the siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, we shall not be far wrong. As to his prophecy, it is the *shortest* in the Bible: one chapter comprehends all. Its subject is the destruction of Edom on account of its cruelty to Judah, Edom's mother, and the restoration of the Jews. Its style is marked by animation, regularity, and clear-
ness.

No. CVIII.

Subject: GOD AND BAD MEN.

"The vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the Lord God concerning Edom; we have heard a rumour from the Lord, and an ambassador is sent among the heathen, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle."—OBADIAH i. 1.

These words suggest two thoughts concerning God and bad men.

I. THAT GOD MAKES A REVELATION CONCERNING BAD MEN.

Here is a revelation concerning Edom, the enemy of God and His people. Isaac had two sons by Rebecca, Esau and Jacob; Esau was called Edom because he robbed his brother of his birthright (Genesis xxv.).

Observe, First:

The forms of the revelation.

(1) As a vision. "The vision of Obadiah." The prophet was a seer. The Eternal revealed Himself to the eyes of his soul. He who would be a true minister of God must see the thing before he speaks it—"That which we have seen and handled," says the Apostle. Man has other eyes than those that are in his forehead. He has a faculty for seeing the invisible and the eternal; this distinguishes him from the brute.

(2) As a report. "We have heard a rumour from the Lord." The word rumour means report; We have heard a report from Jehovah. He heard as well as saw. The soul has ears to catch the echoes of eternal thought. God in times past spake by the fathers to the prophets; and now, as in olden times, speaks by symbols and sayings, by appealing to the eye and the ear.

Observe, Secondly:

The character of this revelation, a message. "An ambassador is sent among the heathen." Did he mean by the ambassador himself, or any other prophet or prophets, or some celestial minister? It does not matter. The message is the thing, a message from Jehovah to the nation. God sends His messages to the nations in many ways and by many agents.

Observe, Thirdly:

The subject of the revelation. "Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle."

The object of the message was to stir up the Assyrians and afterwards the Chaldeans against Edom.

But our proposition is, that God makes a revelation concerning bad men; and the subject of that revelation embraces at least two things. First: *That their sins will ruin them.* This the Almighty has revealed over and over again in the Bible, and in every chapter of human history and experience. The burden of all is "The wages of sin is death." Secondly: *That evangelical repentance will save them.* "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, and He will abundantly pardon." These two subjects are the great burden of God's revelation to bad men.

II. THAT GOD PUNISHES BAD MEN BY BAD MEN. He now sent a messenger amongst the nations, what for? To stir up the Assyrians and Chaldeans—both bad people—to wreak

vengeance on corrupt Edom. Why does He employ bad men for this awful work of retribution? He could do it without any secondary agency at all, or, if He chose to employ any instrumentality, use the forces of nature and the monsters of the forest alone to do the work; why employ bad men to punish bad men, fiend to punish fiend?

By doing so,—

First: He reveals in the *most powerful way to the victim the enormity of his sin*. The torture which his fellow-man brings on him he is made to feel is but a slight stroke of that fiend of depravity which has set his own soul against his Maker.

By doing so,—

Secondly: He reveals His *own absolute power over the workings of the human heart*. Thus "He maketh the wrath of men to praise Him," etc. He works even the devil himself to carry out His will. But though God employs bad men to punish bad men by rapine, plunder, and bloody wars, it is not by His instigation, but by their own free will. He is not the author of evil. All good proceedeth from Him, and all evil is overruled by Him for the order and blessedness of the universe. The devil is not less a devil because he inflicts the penalties of justice on men.

Biblical Criticism.

Subject: Daniel's Dream of the Four Beasts.

"The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things."—Dan. vii. 4-8.

"THE first beast (ver. 4) resembled a lion with eagle's wings. At the entrance to a temple at Birs Nimrud

there has been found (Layard, Bab. and Nin.) such a symbolical figure, viz., a winged eagle with the head of a man. There have been found also images of winged beasts at Babylon (Münter, Relig. der Bab.). These discoveries may be referred to as evidence that this book was composed in Babylon, and also as explaining the Babylonian colouring of the dream. But the representation of nations and kingdoms by the images of beasts is much more widely spread, and affords the prophetic symbolism the necessary analogues and substrata for the vision. Lions and eagles are not taken into consideration here on account of their strength, rapacity, and swiftness, but simply because they are kings among beasts and birds. "The beast rules royally like the lion, and wings its conquering royal flight high over the *οικουμένη* like the eagle." —*Kliefoth*. This emblem corresponds with the representation of the first kingdom with the golden head (chap. ii.). What gold is among metals, and the head among the members of the body, that the lion is among beasts, and the eagle among birds.

After a time Daniel sees a change take place with this beast. The wings, i.e. the feathers by which it flies, are plucked off: it is deprived of its power of flight, so that it can no more fly, conquering over the earth, or hover as a ruler over it; i.e. the kingdom will be deprived of the power of conquering, for it will be lifted up from the earth *וְהִנֵּחַ*, is hoph., cf. chap. iv. 33), and be placed on its feet as a man. The lifting up from the earth does not represent, accordingly, being taken away or blown away from the earth, not the destruction of the Chaldean kingdom (Theodrt., Hieron., Raschi, Hitzig, and others), but the raising of it up when lying prostrate on the ground to the right attitude of a human being. This change is further described by the words, "a man's heart was given to it," denoting that the beast-nature was transformed to that of a man. The three expressions thus convey the idea, that the lion, after it was deprived of its power of flight, was not only in external appearance raised from the form of a beast to that of a man,

but also that inwardly the nature of the beast was ennobled into that of a man. In this description of the change that occurred to the lion there is without a doubt a reference to what is said of Nebuchadnezzar in chap. iv. : it cannot, however, be thence concluded, with Hofmann and others, that the words refer directly to Nebuchadnezzar's insanity; for here it is not the king but the kingdom that is the subject, with reference to whose fate that event in the life of its founder was significant. Forasmuch as it was on account of his haughtiness that madness came upon him, so that he sunk down to the level of the beasts of the field, so also for the same reason was his kingdom hindered in its flight over the earth. "Nebuchadnezzar's madness was for his kingdom the plucking off of its wings;" and as when he gave glory to the most High his reason returned to him, and then for the first time he attained to the true dignity of man, so also was his world-kingdom ennobled in him, although the continued influence of this ennobling may not be perceived from the events in the reign of his son, recorded in chap. v. Besides, there lies herein not only the idea of the superiority of the first world-kingdom over the others, as is represented in chap. ii. by the golden head of the metallic image, but also manifestly the typical thought that the world-kingdom will first be raised to the dignity of manhood when its beast-like nature is taken away. Where this transformation does not take place, or where it is not permanent, there must the kingdom perish. This is the prophetic meaning, for the sake of which that occurrence in the life of the founder of the world-monarchy is here transferred to his kingdom.

(To be continued.)

LIFE.—God help us! it is a foolish little thing, this human life, at the best; and it is half ridiculous and half pitiful to see what importance we ascribe to it, and to its little ornaments and distinctions.—*Jeffrey.*

Homiletical Breviaries.

No. CLXXXII.

Subject: CHRIST'S WISH ABOUT THE LORD'S SUPPER.

"With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you."—
LUKE xxii. 15.

Christ's wish concerning the Lord's Supper will certainly command the ear, mind, and heart of every disciple to-day, as it did nearly two thousand years ago. Then it was an intensely strong wish. Is it not now? In considering this, let us notice, I. CHRIST'S REASONS FOR WISHING THAT PASSOVER with the disciples. Though they are scarcely divisible, because He so completely identified Himself with His disciples, we may notice the reasons for His own sake, and for theirs. 1. For His own sake, (1) *Obedience to His Father's Law*. This He did in spirit, though He used His Divine right in modifying Jewish ritual to its highest end. (2) *Sharing the sympathy of the disciples*. A common meal was the natural, as it is the universal, expression of relations of friendship. And those relations He wanted, in prospect of farewell, to realize. (3) *Anticipation of heavenly joy*. He made this festival an antepast of the Feast above. (4) *Fulfilment of His own mission*. "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." He was longing for the death that should give life to the world, and this supper was at once its symbol and its nearest time-mark. For, once over, Calvary would soon be gained. 2. For the disciples' sake. (1) *That they might learn the truth about Him*. This the emblems to be used by Him would vividly teach. (2) *That they might have a memorial of Him*. II. THAT PASSOVER IS OBSERVED IN THE LORD'S SUPPER. This meal took the place of the Passover by anticipation of some hours, and has succeeded it all through the Christian centuries. Do this "till I come." III. CHRIST'S REASONS FOR WISHING HIS DISCIPLES NOW TO TAKE THE LORD'S SUPPER. Many are the same as then. All may be gathered up into,—1. *Expression of loving loyalty to Him*. 2. *Means of union with Him*. 3. *Means of union with each other*.

Bristol,

URIMAH R. THOMAS.

No. CLXXXIII.

Subject: THE DEAD.

"For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto Him."—LUKE xx. 38.

From these words we infer: I. That all good men, whether their bodies are in the grave or existing on the earth, ARE ALIVE BEFORE GOD. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had long been in their graves, long gone to dust, yet they were living. The visible world of men and the invisible world of spirits are both present to the eye of God as "one community" of living beings. Death is not the extinction of being, but the mere transition in its mode. All the generations of men that have ever appeared on this earth are living, thinking, acting still. God is not the "God of the dead, but of the living." II. That all good men, whether their bodies are in the grave or existing on this earth, LIVE UNTO GOD. "All live unto Him." They all form therefore *one* holy blessed community, burning with one great love, pursuing one great aim. Glorious oneness this!

No. CLXXXIV.

Subject: RELIGIOUS THOUGHTFULNESS.

"O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!"—DEUT. xxxii. 29.

These are the words of a great man, on a great occasion, on a great subject. The man was Moses, the venerable and illustrious leader and lawgiver of Israel. The occasion was his farewell to the people of his charge: he was then 120 years of age, and about to die; and he pours out his remaining energy and life in this valedictory address. The subject is that of *religious thoughtfulness*. "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end." In relation to this subject we offer two remarks. I. It is a subject of SUPREME IMPORTANCE. The power of thought distinguishes man from the brute, and it is that faculty by which he either makes or ruins himself. According to the *subjects* and *modes* of his thought his character is formed. If he wishes to be a merchant, he must think on commercial subjects—a politician, on political subjects—a philosopher, on philosophical subjects; but if he wishes to become a *true man*, he must think on religious subjects, he must

meditate on God, man, duty, destiny. Thought is necessary for two reasons. (1) In order to *realize* these subjects. These subjects may come under his notice in books, conversations, sermons, yet they will have no effect upon him unless he thinks. While we muse the fire burns. (2) In order to *appropriate* these subjects. Religious subjects, in order to make us great, useful, and happy, must be taken into us, appropriated, made the stimulus and nutriment of our own spiritual life. And this can only be done by thought. "As I thought of my ways," said David, "I turned my steps to Thy statutes." All depends on thought. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

II. It is a subject LAMENTABLY NEGLECTED. The exclamation of Moses here implies that self-satisfied, stiff-necked Israel had neglected it. They were religiously thoughtless. This has always been the case with the millions, it is the case now. Millions of our countrymen are not thoughtless people, they are thinking every day with more or less earnestness on every subject except religion—business, art, science, government; but they are not *religiously* thoughtful. Why do they neglect this subject? Not because they doubt its reality, for the people generally are not sceptics; not because these subjects are not brought under their notice; nature, churches, societies, literature, bring them under their notice. Why do they not think of them (1) Their minds are pre-occupied with other subjects. (2) They have an inner dread of those solemn things.

No. CLXXXV.

Subject: RELIGIOUS REVIVALS.

"O Lord, revive Thy work."—HABAKKUK iii. 2.

We offer three thoughts—I. GENUINE RELIGION IS THE WORK OF GOD IN THE SOUL. "Thy work." What is genuine religion? Not theology, not ceremony, but simply this, *supreme love to God*. This is its core, its essence. Where this is, whatever else is absent, genuine religion is; where this is absent, whatever else is present, genuine religion is not. The production of this in the soul is the work of God. He produces it, it is true, by means; nevertheless, no one else can or does produce it but Himself. II. THIS WORK OF GOD IN THE SOUL IS LIABLE TO DECAY. Hence the prayer to "revive" it. There are many things in and outside

of man that tend to impair, weaken, and destroy this supreme love. Carnal impulses, impure associations, social influences, engrossing worldly cares, these are all detrimental. They are to it like a blighting atmosphere to vegetation. III. THIS DECAY SHOULD BE OVERCOME BY A REVIVAL. "Revive Thy work." Revive this supreme love—quicken, energize it, give it more force and influence in the soul! This is the true revival. What is called Religious Revival at this time, is a revival of crude theological dogmas, of mawkish sentiment, of pietistic cant, of hymnological sensualities, of superstitious fears, and of selfish longings for personal enjoyment.

Scientific Facts used as Symbols.

"Books of Illustration" designed to help preachers, are somewhat, we think, too abounding. They are often made up to a great extent of anecdotes from the sentimental side of life, and not always having a healthful influence or historic foundation. We find that preachers and hearers are getting tired of such. Albeit illustrations are needed by every speaker who would interest the people, and are sanctioned by the highest authority. Nature itself is a parable. Hence we have arranged with a naturalist who has been engaged in scientific investigation for many years, to supply the *Humist* with such reliable and well-ascertained facts in nature, as cultured and conscientious men may use with confidence, as mirrors of morals and diagrams of doctrines.

Subject; The Pig and the Reptiles,—Coarse Natures in Useful Employment.

THE pig is an important auxiliary in keeping rattlesnakes at a distance in countries where they abound. In the west and south of America, where a field or farm is infested by these ferocious reptiles, it is usual to put a sow with her young brood there; and the snakes, it is said, will soon be eaten up. It appears, that owing to the fatty matter which envelopes the body of this animal, it is safe from the venomous bite. Besides, it likes the flesh of the snakes, and eagerly pursues them. When a pig sees a rattlesnake, it smacks its jaws, and its hairs bristle up: the snake coils itself up to strike its enemy: the pig approaches fearlessly, and receives the blow in the fold of fat which hangs upon the side of its jaw. Then he places a foot on the tail of the snake, and with

his teeth he begins to pull the flesh of his enemy to pieces, and eats it with evident enjoyment.

Infidelity, intemperance, and tyranny are horrible social reptiles; and they are often successfully attacked by ferocious, illiterate, gross "revivalists" and demagogues, who bristle up to their work of annihilating them, on a method and with a zest not inferior to this rattlesnake-destroyer. These men are not pleasant beings; but, like those other coarse creatures, they are useful for coarse work, and they enjoy it. Their grossness is their qualification; for the stings and wounds by which the progeny of vice would kill other public men, do not affect that bloated self-complacency and dense coarseness in which their rude nature is entirely enveloped. And our feelings of loathing and disgust for these rough sons of coarseness should always be tempered by the remembrance that they are not quite so bad as that which they destroy. The pig, after all, is better than the rattlesnake.

Subject: The Wild Ass,—Easy Subjugation.

THE ass, like the horse, was originally imported into America by the Spaniards, and afterwards by other nations. In its natural state this animal is swift, fierce, and formidable. When attacked, they defend themselves with their heels and mouth with such activity that, without slackening their pace, they often maim their pursuers. But the most remarkable property in these creatures is, that after carrying their first load, their activity leaves them, their dangerous ferocity is lost, and they soon contract the stupid look and dulness peculiar to the asinine species.

There are men who in their constitution and history resemble this animal. A man of this calibre in his married life and his public career, or under the pressure of any troubles, always begins and ends in one never-varying way. He is first showy, pretentious, vociferous, and affects a vast amount of resisting force; but as his manhood is only a resemblance to a thorough-bred man, he is soon quelled. A wife, a priest, or a tyrant places the load well on his back, and all his courage

departs for ever, and in dull submission he will continue to pace in perfect obedience to the bridle of authority.

Subject: The Falcon and the Partridge,—The Stupifying Effects of Fear.

AT the mere sight of one of the falcon tribe a partridge will stop as though struck with stupor, so overcome with fear as to be almost incapable of concealing itself, remaining absolutely immovable; and it is not until the dreaded enemy is gone that it regains self-control. It will even permit itself to be stifled in its hiding-place, sooner than expose itself to the falcon, vulture, or sparrow-hawk.

The like stupifying effects of fear are constantly seen amongst mankind. The lives of many are subject to constant misery as the result of fears, sometimes reasonable, sometimes unreasonable, respecting the intentions of real or imaginary enemies. And probably there is no man who has not, at some time or other, been under the horrible spell of fear which, whether acting on man or bird, has for the time the power to snatch from the muscles and nerves all their vigour and tone, and deprive its subject of all capacity for action. So great a man as Eliphaz declares that fear made even all his bones to shake and the hair of his flesh to stand up.

Subject: The Peacock,—Appearance contrasting with Character.

WHEN the peacock appears with its tail expanded, there is none of the feathered creation can vie with it for beauty; yet the horrid scream of its voice serves to abate the pleasure we find from viewing it; and still more its insatiable gluttony and spirit of depredation make it one of the most vexatious domestics man has taken under his protection.

What Christian minister has not known "peacock" men in every department of life,—those who, by their admirable demeanour, elegance, suavity, and graces, have irresistibly

awakened admiration ; yet, on acquaintance, were detected as the possessors of qualities which belied their appearance and rendered them odious ? Who has not known women of the same species, whose appearance suggested everything that was chaste, refined, and graceful ; but whose disposition was in every way unlovely—who, like the peacock, were delightful as a spectacle, but in other respects detestable ?

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

ORIGINAL SIMILITUDES.

LIFE.—The journey of human life is something like the journey of a man who climbs the Alps. He begins his way surrounded by beautiful scenery in the valleys, richly clustering trees, crystal waters—the air clear, balmy, and laden with sweet aromas. As he ascends, the air gets colder, the scenery more terrible, until he reaches the region of snow, where all is desolation and death. So with life. At first all is genial, lovely, and full of joy : the path is comparatively smooth ; but as he advances the path becomes more craggy, the scenery more terrible, the winds more chilling and cutting, until at last on the awful heights there is nothing but icy desolation.

WORK AND WAIT.—It is stated that the immortal astronomer whose penetrating genius discovered the laws of the motions of the planets,—Kepler of Wurttemberg, whose great labours were not understood by his contemporaries, so that he was reduced to the greatest distress,—when lying on his death bed,

and being asked by a friend whether he suffered not cruelly to be obliged to die without seeing his discoveries appreciated, answered, " My friend, God has waited 5000 years till one of His creatures discovered the admirable laws which He has given to the stars ; why should I then not wait till justice is done me ? " " Be not weary in well doing."

TRUST TO INFINITE LOVE.—There is a story told of a Chamois hunter in Switzerland somewhat illustrative of this subject. " Wandering one day over the Alps, he made a misstep and fell more than a hundred feet to the very bottom of one of those horrid crevices in the ice. It was impossible for him to get up : the sides were too slippery ; there were no means of climbing. He cried out ever so loud ; but no human ear could hear. There was nothing but absolute starvation—death before him. What could he do ? The water came pouring down in an everlasting flood ; he followed the stream until he

entered a great cavern, high-arched, ice-ribbed. There the water gurgled and boiled and disappeared. He could see no exit. There was evidently one somewhere, for that living stream found its way out. There was but one thing for him to do. He looked up at the blue sky, commended himself to God's protection, and then with a strong effort threw himself bodily into that boiling, gurgling stream, and disappeared. A moment after the struggle, he found himself on the outside, thrown on the green grass of the valley of Chamounix, the noon-day sun shining above his head, and the blooming flowers of the mountain about him. The story is an exact type of the human life heavenward. Often, when walking over the ice-fields of our own experience, we make a mis-step which precipitates us into the deep crevice of great misfortune, bereavement, and death. It is impossible to get back to the old position; but the river of love rolls its everlasting flood over the craggy mountain top of frozen life. Follow it. The struggle may be a hard one, but throw yourself in and trust blindly to God. When you hear the voice from heaven saying, "Throw yourself in!" then, though darkness be round about you, though the mind cannot take the situation in at all, though there be nothing but gloom and uncertainty concerning things, trust God. Hurl yourself into the vortex of His will. Say (and mean it too), "Thy will, O God, not mine, be done." You will find that when the flood has nearly stifled you it has at the

same moment been bearing you on, underground it may be, through darkness; but then at last it brings you in its arms safe through to the Vale of Chamounix, the green grass of the new life, surrounded by the flowers of faith, with the canopy of God's protecting power above your heads. If we have faith enough, all will come right at last. God be thanked for that."

HUMILITY.—The richest pearl lies in the deepest seas; the most clustered branch bends the lowest.

"This deep humility we find

The mark of every master mind."

MENTAL MOODS.—The human mind has its moods. These, like the various temperatures and seasons of the earth, are favourable for some results and unfavourable for others. But no material climate is so variable as that of the soul; its changes cannot be kept within the limits of freezing point and blood heat.

HUMAN DEPENDENCY. — No creature on earth is so dependent as man. The earth would blossom, the heavens would shine, the birds would sing, the cattle on the hills would gambol, were there no men; but men could not do without them.

EGOTISM.—There is a vast amount of egotism in our social prayer-meetings, and even in our pulpit devotions. The *I* is constantly projecting itself in our prayers. Men are only what they ought to be, are only true men, as they become self-oblivious. It is only as the carnal *ego* is crucified with Christ that the true *ego* rises into life, honour, and grandeur.

THE INNER MAN.—In all it has a life of its own. It has an orbit as distinct from all others as the planets that roll in space millions of miles away from each other. Every heart not alone knoweth its bitterness, but alone knoweth its own deep principles of action. Absolute loneliness is, after all, the condition of souls. All have to climb mountains concerning which the Almighty has said: "No man shall come up with thee."

THE GRAVE is a pit in which all worldly hopes, possessions, enterprises are lost for ever. All rest together in the dust. There is sometimes a melancholy pleasure in musing upon the grave. When weighed down beneath the trials of life, and when the heart is sickened with the alarming and growing prevalence of social fawnings and flunkeries, arrogancies and tyrannies, falsehoods and frauds, one's heart turns to the grave and finds relief in that deep tide of melancholy thought that buries all.

GOD IN ALL.—Right reason assures us that Divinity, if anywhere, must be everywhere—as truly in the atom as in the globe, in the blade as in the forest, in the calm as in the tempest, in the fly as in the eagle, as truly with the poorest men as with the greatest; and that morally it flashes out in the life of the godly pauper more than in all the magnificent doings of mere worldly dignities.

THE KINGDOM THAT CANNOT BE MOVED.—Evil may and does work against the right, work unremittingly, resolutely, and in a thousand ways; yet it can-

not injure it. It may work calmly, insidiously, but cannot sap its foundations; or it may work in tempests, but it can produce no impression on its architecture. The kingdom of right, after all, is the only growing and enduring kingdom on earth.

THE SOUL.—What possibilities does a single grain possess! Harvests slumber in one seed; forests repose in one shell! What wondrous potentialities lie within the human soul!

A MAN can only become important as he enunciates some great truth that attracts and welds souls together.

WORSHIP.—It is well when all our trials, afflictions, struggles, and varied experiences end in worship. Worship is the heaven of the soul, and the *only* heaven.

LOVE.—The bread of the soul, believe me, is not animal pleasure, not intellectual knowledge, not gold, not power, not fame. It is love—love as flowing from the heart of the living Father, as embodied in the life and inculcated in the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. He who lives in Christ, to use the language of another, stands at the focus of regeneration.

THE TRUE PREACHER.—Preaching is a gift of nature, a gift that involves the highest kind and fullest measure of faculty, imagination, intellect, passion, conscience, verbal fluency, and vocal effectiveness. It is a rare gift, only possessed by one in a thousand; and the attempt to make any of the nine hundred and ninety-nine true preachers, must ever end in failure and disappointment. You can no more make a preacher than you can make a

poet. We are getting tired of "lectures on preaching." The poorest preachers amongst us are the most ready to enact homiletic rules and utter homiletic advice. The born preacher is the only man who can promote good preaching, and this by his own masterly discourses and effective delivery. He should be physically, intellectually, and morally of the highest type of manhood.

HAPPINESS.—No spirit in the universe can be happy without thorough harmony with the will and mind of God. Heaven is happy because of this harmony; hell is miserable because of antagonism to the Divine Mind.

WARNING.—Heaven does not punish without warnings. Nature warns, Providence warns, conscience warns; there is no sinful soul in which the trumpet of alarm does not sound.

THE GOSPEL.—We think it can be demonstrated that the Gospel is not only adapted to man, but is *essential* to man. If a man is to breathe, he must have air; if he is to see, he must have light; if he is to live, he must have food; and if he is to be happy,—happy as a moral and intelligent being,—he must have the Gospel. To prove this to men, is what is wanted in all our books and in all our preaching.

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

THE NEW TESTAMENT TRANSLATED FROM THE CRITICAL TEXT OF VON TISCHENDORF; WITH AN INTRODUCTION ON THE CRITICISM, TRANSLATION, AND INTERPRETATION OF THE BOOK. By SAMUEL DAVIDSON, D.D., LL.D. London: Henry S. King, 65, Cornhill.

We are not a little pleased to receive another learned work from the scholarly pen of Dr. Davidson. When we entered on our ministry, now upwards of thirty years ago, two volumes were presented to us by a friend, which we have regarded ever since as the best books in our library, and from which from time to time we have derived invaluable assistance in our endeavours to interpret God's Holy Word. Dr. Davidson's volume on "Biblical Criticism" as well as that on "Sacred Hermeneutics" are

still invaluable to us; and notwithstanding that since their publication Biblical scholarship has made some progress, the interpretation they give and the hermeneutic rules they propound demand the attention of every man who presumes to expound THE BOOK to others. We cannot better perhaps introduce the work now before us to our readers, than by furnishing them with an extract from the Author's preface. "The present version," says the Author, "originated in one of the conversations which the writer had with Von Tischendorf in the summer of 1872. That scholar had just completed the publication of the 8th critical edition, contemplating no future one, because his best efforts and mature judgment had been expended on the finished volumes. Having prepared a text for scholars, he naturally wished it to be read by all English-speaking people, and asked the Translator to make it accessible to that large class who do not know Greek. Feeling the arduousness of the task, the latter hesitated, but finally consented to gratify a friend whom he loved; and some arrangements were made at the time for its immediate performance. But difficulties arose. Von Tischendorf was struck down, and compelled to cease from mental occupation. Affliction came upon the present writer, also, who was visited with irreparable loss. The translation was interrupted by this bereavement and by a subsequent sojourn in Italy. But it was never abandoned. Though prosecuted slowly, the Author felt himself bound by a principle of honour to perform his promise. It has been a solace in affliction, a relief from the fruitless indulgence of regrets, an engrossing employment amid lonely longings for the society of the just made perfect. Our friend, alas! is not here to see the completed work. Had he lived, he would have written an Introduction to accompany the present one. But his ideas generally coincided with those of the Translator; and he would have expressed little that has not been said here. His Preface would have related to the text he finally edited, whose antiquity he put on a par almost with originality; for his opinion was, that the text of the second century is presented in substantial integrity."

The Author's Introduction is exceedingly valuable. It contains strictures, honest, generous, and enlightened, upon the translations of Dean Alford, the American Bible Union, and Dr. Noyes of Halle University, and others. It also lays down and vindicates the principle on which his own translation has proceeded, which is that of strict literality and the smallest possible amount of paraphrase. It has, moreover, many valuable remarks on certain disputed and misunderstood passages. As to the translation itself, it is as faithful to the original as any translation can be, and free from any theological and sectarian bias. There is no translation of the New Testament extant equal to it, and henceforth it must be used as *The New Testament in English*. In looking into it somewhat carefully, we have had one old regret concerning the Author removed, and another old regret strengthened. The one removed is this, that the Author was not appointed a member of the Bible Revision Committee. When that Committee was formed, we wondered and

grieved that such a Biblical scholar as Dr. Davidson was left out : there was no man in Europe more eligible, few men appointed who could approach him in linguistical attainment, Biblical scholarship, and critical acumen. With this translation in our hands this regret vanishes. The Revision Committee is formed of men of different communions and theological predilections. Their rendering, we presume, is a matter of voting. Numbers, not capacity, learning, or merit, will carry the day. It would be more than human, therefore, to expect a thoroughly faithful translation. While Dr. Davidson is profoundly Christian in doctrine and spirit, few men are freer from theological bias or ecclesiastical influences than he ; and as a scholar pre-eminent amongst scholars, we have here, therefore, a translation more faithful than we could possibly expect from any committee of men. But whilst this work has banished one regret it has strengthened another. The learned Author of this book, who was Professor of Biblical Literature in the Royal Academical University of Belfast some thirty-five years ago, subsequently held for many years a chair in the Lancashire Independent College. Why is he not there now ? His position there, we know, gave a prestige to the institution and shed a lustre on the communion to which it belonged ; and never had the Independent denomination fewer distinguished scholars than now. Why did he resign ? A few men,—most of whom, we think, are in their graves (and therefore their names shall not be mentioned),—raised against him the charge of heresy ; fools believed the charge. The Doctor walked away from their midst, if not with indignation, with a dignity that became a high-minded man. We have reason to believe that the most enlightened and ablest men of that communion have never ceased to regret the loss of such a man to their denomination. It is indeed a loss ; but no great souls can live in a denomination.

The Dedication of this book is exquisitely beautiful and touching ; its wail has struck in us one of the deepest chords of the heart.

THE RELIGION OF THE CHRIST. THE BAMPTON LECTURES FOR 1874. By REV. STANLEY LEATHES, M.A. London : Rivingtons.

The subjects of these lectures are,—“Anticipation of the Christ in heathen nations ; The Christ of Jewish history ; The Christ of the Psalms ; The Christ of prophecy ; The Christ of the Gospels ; The Christ of the Acts ; the Christ of the Pauline Epistles ; The Christ of the other books.” “The object of the Lectures,” says the author, “has been to unfold the significance, too often overlooked or forgotten, of the name Christianity, which is neither more nor less than the religion of the Christ. As a matter of historic fact, the name by which this religion is known does not lead us back so to Christ as its Founder,—in the way that Mahomedanism leads us back to Mahomet for its founder,—as it does to Christ as the object and substance of the earliest ascertainable faith of the people called Christians. Whatever uncertainty, real or imaginary, may attach to the actual origin of this belief, there is and can be no question whatever as

to its earliest expressions. These survive to us in literary monuments which are imperishable and undoubted. The four great epistles of St. Paul are themselves a treasury of evidence in this respect; and they must continue to be so until it can be shown on equal evidence, which as yet is not producible, that they represent only one phase, and that a partial and sectional phase, of early Christianity."

It is needless to say that the Author has accomplished the work he undertook in a most satisfactory manner. His lectures reveal extensive reading, much originality, vigorous thought, and a fine, clear, and energetic style of utterance.

THE KERNEL OF TRUTH, STRIPPED OF THE HUSB; OR, THE SOUL AND THE SPIRIT OF MAN, AND THEIR CONSCIOUS EXISTENCE IN THE INTERMEDIATE STATE. By SILAS HENN. London: Elliot Stock, Paternoster Row.

The author of this pamphlet sets himself to the establishing of three propositions. First: That the soul is not mere animal life, common alike to man and beast, but that it embraces the rational nature or the intellectual life. Secondly: That the spirit in man, whilst an emanation from the Divine Spirit, is not to be regarded simply as a portion of the Divine Spirit. Thirdly: That the spirit of man exists in a conscious state between death and the resurrection. The author, in his arguments, combats the work of Mr. Henry Constable, entitled "Hades,"—this work, however, we have not seen;—and at the same time he adduces with much pertinence and point a large variety of Biblical passages to sustain his positions. The Author, in thought, spirit, and style, deserves all praise.

REGENERATION. By the late Rev. WILLIAM ANDERSON, LL.D. WITH AN INTRODUCTORY SKETCH OF REV. JOHN KER, D.D. London: Hodder & Stoughton, Paternoster Row.

Many years ago, on its first appearance, we made ourselves acquainted with this work. We then formed a very high judgment of it; and although since then our reading and thinking have been very considerable, our estimate is not much abated. There are few, if any, works on the subject that we consider superior to this. And although the theology of the book is too stiffly orthodox to accord with our views of Biblical teaching, and its explanation of the work of regeneration in the soul does not exactly satisfy our metaphysics, we can with the utmost confidence recommend the work. "It is,"—to use the language of Dr. Ker, in his able introductory sketch,—“a true book by a true man.”



A HOMILY

ON

Nehushtan; or, Means and Ends in our Spiritual Life.

"He [Hezekiah] . . . brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan."—2 KINGS xviii. 4.

THE temple at Jerusalem was the national museum of the Jews. It was fitting that it should be so, for the treasures of that God-governed nation were all of a sacred kind. Among the most prized of all the objects contained in that great sanctuary, there was one round which very interesting associations gathered, and which, for many reasons, the ancient people would be loath to lose. I refer to the brazen serpent, that image which belonged to the pilgrim-passage of their history, and which was connected with a very striking incident in the experience of their fathers. The fact that it was so long preserved, proves of itself that no slight feeling was entertained about it. One generation handed it down to another through several centuries. It might well have served the people of God as a KINDLY BEACON, warning

them against rebellious murmurings, and also as a FRIENDLY TOKEN, attesting the readiness and power of Jehovah to redeem them in the time of their calamity and distress. But between *what might have been* and *what was*, how wide and deep the gulf! That image of brass, instead of rendering an important spiritual service, became the occasion of idolatrous homage. Instead of leading the thoughts of men's minds to God, it drew them *from Him*; and instead of reverencing *Him*, they worshipped *it*. So the brave and wise king,—daring all reproach and rejecting all half-measures,—brake it up before the eyes of the people, and, in the act of destruction, called it “Nehushtan,” *i. e.*, a bit of brass. This he did that he might impress on their minds, by word as well as deed, that this image, which they had turned into an idol, was nothing but a piece of workmanship, made of man's hands, and to be unmade of him at his will. The principle which lies at the root of this somewhat daring and very decisive act, is this,—*that no good thing, however good it be, must be allowed to come between our souls and God, to rob Him of His service*; that, if anything does so come, a strong hand must be used,—if need be, a *destructive* one,—to take it away: or, to put the truth in a more positive form, that whatever *means* we use for worship or instruction, must *not* be turned into an *end*, but must be resolutely and determinedly employed *as a means* to bring the mind into the presence of God's truth and the heart into communion with Himself.

To take the closest illustration we can find, let us suppose that the exploring expedition at work at Jerusalem should discover the *very* cross on which the Saviour hung, or the *very* spear which pierced His side; I do not hesitate to say that in such an event it would be a piece of wisdom and piety to break it and burn it, as its preservation would certainly draw away the thought and

trust of millions of souls from the Crucified One Himself to the mere instrument of His crucifixion, so doing vastly more harm than it could possibly do good.

In times like these, when the symbolic services of our pure and spiritual faith are made of so much account, when men are taught to rest in the outward ceremony instead of using it for a spiritual exercise, and are led to think that there is something really and inherently efficacious in consecrated elements, I think it is wise, if not necessary, to follow Hezekiah's example when he called the sacred image "a piece of brass," and, rejecting all sacerdotal terms, to speak simply of the *water* and the *bread* and the *wine*; and that it is needful to insist strenuously and earnestly that it is only as these outward and fleshly services bring our spirits into conscious contact with God and His truth, that they serve the purpose for which the Master meant them; and further, that it would be better that they should cease to be,—better that they should be broken up and laid aside,—than be continued as occasions of unintelligent, fleshly, and essentially idolatrous worship.

To whatever Church we belong, we stand in some danger. It is, indeed, hardly open to question that elaborate ritual and imposing ceremonies raise the peril to the highest point, while simple services reduce it to the lowest. But it is an infirmity of our nature: it is human rather than ecclesiastical. The tendency is in us all to rest in the material instead of rising above the visible means to the end for which they are designed. Wisdom prescribes the disuse of that which is more abused than used (as was the brazen serpent in the time of Hezekiah), and where disuse is impossible, a conscientious carefulness in the use.

Let us apply our principle to—

I. OUR TREATMENT OF THE BIBLE.

There is a sense in which we cannot speak of the Bible in too glowing terms. The terms in which we praise it in our speeches and our hymns are not extravagant,—

“’Tis a broad land of wealth unknown
Where springs of life arise,
Seeds of immortal bliss are sown,
And hidden glory lies.”

But *wherein resides its virtue?* There is nothing in the words which are employed more sacred than in those which are found in any book of devotion. There is no virtue or charm in the mere sound of the sentences which it contains. If we suppose,—as I verily believe many people do,—that we are any better for having a Bible on our shelves, or on our tables, or in our hands, *apart from the use we make of it*; or if we think that we are any better before God because we go regularly and perhaps slavishly through an allotted portion of it, casting our eyes over it, or uttering in regular sequence the sounds for which the letters stand, *whether or not we take its truth into our minds*, then are we making the same kind of mistake which the children of Israel made in burning incense to the brazen serpent: we are making an end of that which is only valuable as a means. As long as that image taught them of God and led their minds in grateful thought to *Him*, it did positive good; but so soon as it drew their thoughts to itself and led them to put any trust in *it*, immediately it came, injuriously and idolatrously, between them and God. If we attach a superstitious value to the book itself, because the will and word of God may be learned therefrom, if we suppose its presence in our homes or hands, or the taking of its words into our lips, or their being sounded in our ears, is, of itself and in itself serviceable to us, we are ascribing a virtue and value to a thing which does not belong to it. We are putting our trust in an outward observance, we

are "having confidence in the flesh," we are assuring our hearts vainly, mistakenly, dangerously. A man might read the Bible all day long, and pay to it the utmost possible veneration; but if it excited no reverent thought of God in his mind, if it effected no change for the better in his spirit, if it stirred no feelings of love in his heart, if it furnished his mind with no helpful principles by which to regulate his life—of what service would it be to him? What good would it do? *None whatever.* And it might do this serious harm,—it might lead him to put a vain trust in a mere outward act, a mere fleshly ceremony, which, void as we are supposing it to be of spiritual feeling, would in the sight of God be of no more account than the bead-telling of the Romanist or the machinery-praying of the Indian. It is well to put it plainly to ourselves, that as the brazen serpent was, in itself, no more than a piece of brass, so the Bible is, to the man who reads it mechanically and unspiritually, no more than a mass of leather, paper, and printer's ink. It will be of no positive service to us, except as, by its means, we become more familiar with the will of God and are drawn nearer in spirit to our Saviour. "*We are the circumcision who . . . have no confidence in the flesh.*" The words Christ speaks to us are "spirit and life," or they are nothing. "The letter killeth, it is the spirit which quickeneth." Let us come to the Word of God, not in the spirit of a superstitious veneration, but in the spirit of intelligent devotion. Let us prize it, because, if we read it with the understanding and the heart in full exercise, we may have our minds illumined with God's own truth, our souls strengthened with renewed desires to be likeminded with our Lord, ourselves more fully penetrated with those holy principles and with that loving spirit by which our conduct and bearing toward our brother will be rightly regulated and harmoniously at-

tuned. Let us rejoice greatly in it because by the exercise of our spiritual faculties, aided by His Holy Spirit, we may know more of God from its teaching, and be drawn up into the very life which He is living.

This principle will apply to—

II. THE EMPLOYMENT OF APPROVED EVANGELICAL PHRASEOLOGY. Certain terms and phrases, either taken from the Scriptures or based upon them, were once in constant use in Evangelical addresses, which now are but rarely employed. Many are apprehensive that this is indicative of a departure from the old faith; it may simply be significant of the presence of new life. There is no virtue in any phrase, however true or scriptural it may be. There is danger, and may be even death, in a blind attachment and unreasoning commitment to a mere "form of sound words." It is so easy to run in the verbal ruts of pious phraseology, and fancy ourselves to be therefore in the way to heaven. It is so easy to take up the consecrated catchwords of Evangelical religion, and suppose ourselves to be, therefore, under the power of the truth. It is therefore a measure of practical Christian wisdom, not necessarily to cast aside as mischievous these old and good terms, but to use others with freedom and plentifulness; to put the truth of God which is to affect us into the most modern, living, common words we can find; to take it out of the livery of theological science, and clothe it in the dress of everyday life; in a word, to teach and speak the truth of the first century in the language and idiom of the nineteenth. This is true conservatism. The careful and scrupulous guarding of old forms, the embalming of honoured phrases, is a false method and perfectly futile. Let the old and everliving Gospel be uttered in the latest forms of speech, and it will live. And let man judge (test) themselves in this matter, that they be not

judged (condemned) at last. Are there not many in our churches who, because their lips have learnt to speak freely of the "grace of God," and the "blood of Christ," and the "work of the Spirit," fancy themselves possessed in very deed of the light of life and a title to the heavenly mansions? Are there not thousands who want to be warned in the plainest way, that Evangelical phrases on the lips are in themselves as powerless to save a soul as was that piece of brass which Hezekiah broke up before the Jews? It is the faith, the resting and trusting of the heart, in the one case as it was in the other, which "makes whole." All the Evangelical vocabulary gleaned from the Epistles, or caught up from all the Calvinistic divines, will not pass one soul through the gates of Paradise. They are only valuable as through them the soul comes unto and hides in the Saviour; thus used, they lead unto life eternal.

Of other means of grace and growth which God has given us, "we cannot now speak particularly;" but we insist on the application of this one leading principle to them all, viz., that they must be scrupulously and religiously held to their true use, preserved *as means to an end*, made tributary and serviceable to the growth of godliness in our hearts, and not rested in and built upon as being efficacious in and of themselves.

Much might be said of—

III. OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL. There will always be some danger of a regular Ministry sinking into a Priesthood. I say *sinking*, for there is a great *descent*, as well as *difference*, between the two. The *Priest* is the man who *acts for another with God*. The *Minister* is he who *helps another to come himself unto God*, in all holy and happy intercourse and relationship. Let us, ministers and people, take care that we keep our place—that is, that we do not *come down*

to take the lower place, which does not belong to the dispensation of the grace of God in which we stand. The Minister of Jesus Christ is before his people, not to pray for them, but to help them to pray; not to appear for them before God with sacerdotal favouritism, but to bring God's truth before their judgment, that they may accept it for themselves; to present God's love and righteousness to their souls, that they may be rightly affected by it; not to re-present the sacrifice of Calvary, offered "once for all," and "perfecting for ever them that are sanctified," but to go with them to God, and so to present His quickening truth, that they may become intelligent rejoicing worshippers, "dwelling in the house of the Lord all the days of their life," "beholding the beauty of the Lord," and "set before His face for ever." If Christ's ambassador does not this, he does nothing; he does worse than nothing, for he probably comes between God and them, not to show them His word and lead them to Him, but to make them think they are the better with God, because they have been represented at His court by His special Minister; and that trust is vain; for God does not now ask for representative but personal spiritual devotion, and He will take nothing less. Every man must bear his own burden; every man must be a priest unto God; every man must draw nigh unto God,—must come unto Christ *himself*; and the one service that the Minister can render, and the highest he can conceivably render, is to help him to come. Christian men! have no confidence in the flesh, in the human; worship God in spirit: rejoice in Christ Jesus; and if you avail yourselves of a human instrumentality, as you will certainly need to do, see that the Ministry be made the instrument, the channel, the *means*,—that and nothing more, or rather nothing less,—the means by which you give yourselves anew to God and yield yourselves to Christ, a reasoning, a spiritual sacrifice!

Open to a like abuse is—

IV. OUR PROFESSION OF PERSONAL PIETY. Only too often is this regarded as the attainment of an end, rather than the employment of a means of good. Men are apt, having reached that stage, to settle down into a slumberous state of spiritual complacency, instead of feeling that, by taking this step, they have entered into a wider realm of privilege and opportunity, where their noblest powers may engage in fullest exercise. It becomes a haven of indolent and treacherous security, instead of a sanctuary for intelligent devotion, a field for active Christian work, and thus it is perverted from a blessing to a bane.

It is well for us all occasionally to arrest ourselves in our routine of devotion and religious activity, and to ask ourselves what use we are making of the various means we are employing. Sacred days and sacred places, sacred words and sacred acts, are of no account whatever, except we so use them that we ourselves rise, through them, to understand the truth, to hold intercourse with God, and to consecrate ourselves afresh to the service of our Saviour. To rest in rites, however simple, to stop spiritually at services, however scriptural, is to miss the mark, to catch at the shadow, to hold the husk from which the kernel is departed. And when the soul satisfies itself with this, it is sure to pine if it does not perish. It is wise to disuse that which has lost its true significance, while, in regard to that with which no man can dispense,—the word of God, the ministry, the sanctuary,—let us remember that between a servile and fleshly submission on the one hand, and a discerning and spiritual use on the other hand, there is all the distance between fatal folly and heavenly wisdom.

Salisbury.

W. CLARKSON, B.A.

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Psalms.

Our Purpose.—Many learned and devout men have gone philologically through this *TEKKIN*, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal hermeneutics of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough homiletic treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

Our Method.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1) The *HISTORY* of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2) *ANALYSES* of the passage. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase, or allusion that may occur.—(3) The *ASSESSMENT* of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is amongst the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4) The *HOMILIZING* of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavour so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately deduced, as to suggest such thoughts, and indicate such sermonizing methods, as may promote the proficiency of modern pulpit ministrations.

Subject: An Old Sermon on a Subject ever New.

(Continued from page 18.)

HOMILETICS:—This psalm may be regarded as an old *sermon* on a *subject ever new*, and in this aspect it throws itself into four divisions, viz., the subject of this old sermon, the hearers of this old sermon, the preacher of this old sermon, the arguments of this old sermon.

I. The **SUBJECT** of this old sermon. What is the subject? It is expressed in the fifth and sixteenth verses, "Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?" "Be not thou afraid when one is made rich when the glory of his house shall be increased."

The leading idea is, that the good man has no great reason for fearing any evil that the richest worldly man can afflict on him. Two facts are included in the doctrine. First: *That wicked men here do often become very rich.* This has always been the case; on this very day, throughout Christendom and throughout the world, the great bulk of wealth is in the hand of the wicked. The most prosperous farmers, merchants, lawyers, doctors, manufacturers, are, in the majority of cases, men

destitute of moral goodness. The fact admits of easy explanation (1) Worldly prosperity with the wicked is their "one thing." It is what they estimate the chief good, and to their chief good they concentrate all the fires and forces of their nature. The man who selects one thing, and says, "This one thing I do," will in all probability distinguish himself in that pursuit. Wealth is the one thing of worldly men: this is their *summum bonum*, it kindles their enthusiasm, engrosses their energy, and commands their time. It is the goal in their life-race, towards which they bend all the energy of their being. Money to them is everything; they labour for it, and verily they have their reward. Now a good man does not do this, cannot do this; worldly wealth to him is a subordinate thing. The eyes of his soul are not fixed on those things that are seen and temporal; he lays up for himself treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust can corrupt.

(2) The conditions by which worldly wealth is attained are often such that a good man revolts from and disobeys. Fraud, falsehood, sharp practice, enthusiastic devotion, are often required; and, as a rule, these are the successful pathways to fortune. A man who is bent on making a fortune will often have to say to his conscience what Abraham said to his ass, "Tarry here while I go yonder"—yonder in the path of commercial pursuits. Wonder not then that wicked men are and ever have been amongst the wealthiest men. As a rule, man has in this life what he goes in for; he who goes in for wealth may have it. Secondly: *That wicked men often so employ their wealth as to terrify the good.* Hence the self-admonition, "Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased." Wealth makes unprincipled men haughty, heartless, oppressive, cruel. Persecutions, martyrdoms, have in all ages been instigated, sanctioned, and enforced by affluent wickedness. The subject of this old psalm, then, is neither obsolete nor local; it is as true to-day as ever, as real here in England as in any other part of the world. Gold is against goodness; albeit goodness should not be alarmed, it should be calm and heroic. "Be not thou afraid when one is made

rich." There is no just reason for this. Thou hast, if godly, conscience with thee, the universal Church with thee, the eternal laws of the world with thee, God with thee. "Be not thou afraid," "All things work together for good," etc.

II. The **HEARERS** of this old sermon. What was the congregation to which this old sermon was addressed? For whom was it composed? The first two verses answer the question, "Hear this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world: both low and high, rich and poor together," "All ye people, people of every clime, land, tongue." "All ye inhabitants of the world," wherever they are, on whatever zone of the globe; whatever they are, whatever their physical conformation, their mental attributes, or spiritual character. "Low and high, rich and poor." The occupants of thrones and the tenants of huts—the most opulent and the most indigent. The subject is a human one; it concerns all men, it appeals to all men, it demands the attention of all men. The doctrine that good men should not dread the power of wealth, is not a doctrine of temporal expediency or local politics; it is universal. First: All men *have a tendency* to crouch before wealth. See the thousands on Lord Mayor's day, or the public manifestations of royalty, waving their hats and shouting with tremulous voices their hurrahs to wealth. The man is overawed in the presence of the little glittering nabob. A sad fact this in human nature; but a fact it is! Secondly: All men are *degraded* in crouching before wealth. The man who in any way renders homage to worldly riches, injures his moral nature. Why, in our England to-day, is there confessedly less public spirit, less practical sympathy with the right for the right's sake, less of the self-denying in spirit, the morally heroic, than in any previous time? The chief, if not the sole cause, is the degrading influence of wealth upon the common mind. The English mind has 'grown mercenary, servile, grovelling, and grubby. Money has weakened our manhood, despoiled it to a great extent of its independency and chivalry. Let then all the "inhabitants of the world" attend to the great doctrine of this psalm.

III. The PREACHER of this old sermon. Who is the preacher? Though we are not certain as to his name or personal history, we have here some light concerning his mind and mission. "My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding. I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my dark saying upon the harp." Taking this account of himself as correct, we learn that he was wise, thoughtful, devout, and cheerful.

First: He was *wise*. "My mouth shall speak of wisdom." When a preacher, as he stands up before his audience, has a consciousness that he has wisdom, he has the best qualification for the delivery of a good discourse. Feeling that he has the true thing to say, he says it in the best way and in the best spirit. Human souls are made to receive wisdom, they open to it as flowers to the sun; and he who can impart it may well expect a listening ready and hearty. The man who can stand up before his congregation with a strong inward assurance that he has Divine wisdom to impart, is invested with a power which will enable him to work most beneficent results even in the process of his discourse.

Secondly: He was *thoughtful*. "The meditation of my heart shall be of understanding." There are two classes of spurious preachers. (1) Those who do not think at all. Either from the lack of capacity or disposition, they have no thought within them of any substance or worth. They speak only the crude things which the memory of their ill-stored minds throws up under the excitement of the hour. Albeit they speak not the less fluently and loudly on this account, for the shallow stream often runs more rapidly than deep rivers; and from empty barrels you can send forth more noise than from those that are full to the brim. (2) Those who think on worthless subjects. Not a few preachers who think, think only on hoary dogmas and the miserable *isms* of their little sect. Now, in contradistinction to both these classes, the preacher before us not only thought, but thought on true subjects. "The meditation of my heart shall be of understanding." The great Teacher of all teachers—God—pours know-

ledge into no mind irrespective of the free and honest use of its faculties. If you are to get light from heaven, the "mediation" of your heart must be of "understanding."

Thirdly: He was *devout*. "I will incline mine ear to a parable." As the lyrist bends his ear to the sounds of the harp he is preparing for music, so the soul of the true preacher inclines its ear to the eternal voices of truth. Divine wisdom crieth aloud everywhere, but her voice is heard only by the listening ones. He only gets prepared to preach who, like young Samuel, stands in a waiting attitude of soul, exclaiming, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

Fourthly: He was *cheerful*. "I will open my dark saying upon the harp." He felt that his subject was somewhat enigmatic and mysterious, but it did not depress him. Nor would he speak it with a saddened heart, or in sepulchral tones. If mystery is to sadden, no creature mind can be happy, for mystery pervades all things: the universe floats on it as on a dark and fathomless tide. The preacher before us seems happy although the subject of his discourse involved riddles and enigmas. Hence he wished to have the whole set to music, "I will open my dark saying upon the harp." Blessed is the state of that preacher's soul who can set providential mysteries and theological difficulties to music.

IV. The ARGUMENTS of this old sermon. The grand subject of this old sermon, as we have seen, is, that the good man has no just reason for fearing any evil that the richest worldly man can afflict on him. The arguments he employs to sustain and illustrate this are numerous and striking. We will state them in the fewest possible words.

First: The *impotency and transitoriness of wealth*. What can wealth do? It cannot *deliver from the grave*. "They that trust in their wealth and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother nor give to God a ransom for him," etc. Can wealth procure the elixir of immortality? No. Can all the wealth of the world deliver even one man from the power of the grave? No. Could it have done so, kingdoms would have been

bartered away for a few hours. The redemption of life is too "precious," and wealth "ceaseth for ever" to effect it; it has tried millions of times but never has succeeded. Death can gain as easy an access to a monarch's palace as to a peasant's hut: "there is no discharge in that war." Then how transitory too! "Wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others." Not only is the wealth of the richest man utterly incapable to deliver him from the grave, but it passes from him into the hands "of others." His houses, lands, title deeds, gold, parks, equipages, all pass from him: others have them. "Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him."

Secondly: The *incorrigibility and miserable end of the affluent wicked*. Look at their folly. "Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations: they call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish." Their "inward thought," the thought that lies behind all their other thoughts, has to do with wealth.* What a foolish thought this inward thought is! And yet it cannot be reasoned away, with all your argumentation it remains a highly central force in the worldling's avaricious soul. Verily this their way is their folly. What makes the matter worse is, that this inward thought is transmitted. Those who follow act in the same way, "their posterity approve their sayings;" thus from generation to generation the folly goes on.

Thirdly: The *wretched end of the affluent wicked, as contrasted with the end of the morally good*. "Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling." "He shall go to the generation of his fathers: they shall never see

* See *Homilist*, Editor's Series, vol. ix., p. 244.

light. Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish." "Like sheep" in what respect? Not in their innocency in life, but in their impotence in death. In life perhaps they were like prowling lions, but in death harmless as sheep; and corruption will deal with them as sheep. "Death shall feed on them."

"Even as a flock arrayed are they
For the dark grave,
Death guides their way."—*Wordsworth.*

Not only are their bodies corrupted, but their beauty and glory consumed. There lie the bones of the proud monarch who in life fancied himself a little god, his ashes mingling with the dust of those whom he treated with cruelty and contempt. He shall carry nothing away. "Life," said old Thomas Adams, "is like the banks of a river, his temporal estate is the stream; time will moulder away the banks, but the stream stays not for that, it glides away continually. Life is the tree, riches are the fruit, or rather the leaves; the leaves will fall, the fruit is plucked, and yet the tree stands. Some write of the pine-tree, that if the bark be pulled off, it lasts long; being on, it rots. If the worldling's bark were stripped off, he might perhaps live the longer; there is great hope he would live the better."

In contrast with all this, mark the end of the upright man. "The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning." "God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave." What meaneth this? If it points not to the resurrection, it has still a significance. Though a good man must die, death does not conquer him. He dies willingly, bravely, often exultingly, feeling that death is a mere transit to the skies. Death is his deliverer, not his destroyer; his morning, not his night; his minister, not his master. Now the conclusion from all these considerations that the preacher draws, is, "Be not thou afraid when one is made rich."

CONCLUSION: Verily this old sermon, with its universal subjects, great congregation, noble preacher, and impressive arguments, is well worth our study.

"Thus did a choking wanderer in the desert cry,
'Oh that Allah one prayer would grant before I die;
That I might stand up to my knees in a cool lake,
My burning tongue and parching throat in it to slake.'

"No lake he saw, and when they found him in the waste,
A bag of gems and gold lay just before his face;
And his dead hand a paper with this writing grasped,
'Worthless was wealth when dying for water I gasped.'

"Be diadem or helmet on thy head,
It must be arrow-pierced and thou be dead;
Then every man whose mind is wisdom stocked,
Will strive to have his wealth in heaven locked."

Oriental, translated by W. Alger.

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Job.

The Book of Job is one of the grandest sections of Divine Scripture. It has never yet, to our knowledge, been treated in a purely Homiletic method for Homiletic ends. Besides many learned expositions on the book found in our general commentaries, we have special exegetical volumes of good scholarly and critical worth; such as Drs. Barnes, Wemyss, Mason Goode, Noyes Lee, Delitzsch, and Herman Hedwick Bernard: the last is in every way a masterly production. For us, therefore, to go into philology and verbal criticism, when such admirable works are available to all students, would be superfluous, if not presumption. Ambiguous terms, when they occur, we shall of course explain, and occasionally suggest an improved rendering; but our work will be chiefly, if not entirely, Homiletic. We shall essay to bring out from the grand old words those Divine verities which are true and vital to man as man in all lands and ages. These truths we shall frame in an order as philosophic and suggestive as our best powers will enable us to do; and this in order to help the earnest preachers of God's Holy Word.

Subject: Great Crimes not always followed by Great Punishment in this Life.

"Why, seeing times are not hidden," etc.—JOB xxiv. 1-25.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS: Ver. 1.—"*Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know Him not see His days?*" There are various translations of this verse. That of Dr. Bernard seems to us the best. "Why is it thus? Events are not hidden from the Almighty, yet they that love Him do not see His days." Since all events are confessedly known to the Almighty, why is it that those who know Him see not His days of retribution upon the wicked?

Ver. 2.—“*Some remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed thereof.*” Job now proceeds to specify some of the flagrant crimes that were perpetrated by men on whom no judgment came. Here is an old form of dishonesty. By changing the landmarks, they decreased their neighbour's lands and increased their own. They tempted the herds or the flocks into their own fold.

Ver. 3.—“*They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge.*” They rob the widow and the orphan, by taking away the ox and the ass.

Ver. 4.—“*They turn the needy out of the way: the poor of the earth hide themselves together.*” They oppress the poor to such an extent that they dare not show themselves in the street.

Ver. 5.—“*Behold, as wild asses in the desert, go they forth to their work; rising betimes for a prey: the wilderness yieldeth food for them and for their children.*” Like wild asses, which are never seen but in the desert, where they seek for pasture, so the poor whom they oppress, not being suffered to abide in the villages and towns, must work in the desert for food for themselves and their children.

Ver. 6.—“*They reap every one his corn in the field: and they gather the vintage of the wicked.*” They break in upon the fields of others, and feed upon their grain, instead of cultivating their fields for themselves.

Ver. 7, 8.—“*They cause the naked to lodge without clothing, that they have no covering in the cold. They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the rock for want of a shelter.*” They deprive the poor of their clothing, so that they are left naked, shivering in the cold nights, seeking shelter only in the crevices of the rocks.

Ver. 9, 10.—“*They pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor. They cause him to go naked without clothing, and they take away the sheaf from the hungry.*” They steal unprotected children and sell them into slavery, and take the very bread out of the mouth of the poor.

Ver. 11.—“*Which make oil within their walls, and tread their winepresses, and suffer thirst.*” “They press out oil within their (the wicked men's) walls; they tread their winepresses, and yet suffer thirst.”—Dr. Bernard.

Ver. 12.—“*Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out.*” Having described the crimes which the wicked perpetrated on the poor in the rural districts, he proceeds to notice the enormities committed in the city. In the city men are groaning under the oppressions of the wicked. “Yet God layeth not folly to them,” i.e., God does not punish them.

Ver. 13, 14.—“*They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof. The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief.*” “Job now divides the wicked into two classes, the one composed of

such hardened villains as are bold enough to commit the most horrible crimes in broad daylight; the other, of those who, being too cowardly for this, dare not face the light, but sneak away to their dens at its approach. He says, some of them are among those who rebel against the light. That is, who, as it were, bid defiance to the light, and ply their horrible trade in the middle of the day. Others again there are who do not know its ways nor abide in its paths, who are so much afraid of the light as to avoid it altogether. The murderer riseth with the daylight. Not because he dreads the full light of the sun, but so as to have all the day before him. And killeth the poor and needy. He is quite indifferent to the sun's shining upon his murderous deeds. But in the night he is again as though he were a thief. Though in the daytime he displays more boldness than those sneaking cowards who only venture to carry on their depredations under the cover of deep darkness, yet he is not ashamed to imitate them. His greediness is so great as to induce him to stoop to thieving in the night."—*Dr. Bernard.*

Ver. 15.—“*The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me : and disguiseth his face.*” The adulterer is ever a sneak and a coward.

Ver. 18.—“*In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the daytime: they know not the light.*” Here is a description of a burglar. He hides himself in the day, and goes forth in the night to dig into the houses and to plunder them.

Ver. 17.—“For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death.” The meaning is, that they are familiar with the blackest night and dread it not; but daylight, which may reveal them, they dread.

Ver. 18.—“*He is swift as the waters ; their portion is cursed in the earth : he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards.*” The point of comparison here is the swiftness of the disappearing criminal. He is carried quickly past as any light substance on the surface of the water. He is hurried along with the swiftness of the current, and can scarcely be seen. “It is not,” says Barnes, “uncommon to describe one who is about to commit crime in the night as moving noiselessly along—as taking the utmost precaution that silence should be preserved.” So Macbeth, when about to commit murder, soliloquizes:—

“ Now o’er the one half world
Nature seems dead . . .

and withered murder,
 Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
 Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
 With Tarquin's ravishing strides, toward his design
 Moves like a ghost.—Thou sure and firm-set earth,
 Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
 Thy very stones prate of my where-about."

- Ver. 19.—“*Drought and heat consume the snow waters : so doth the grave those which have sinned.*” Job means to say, that gently as the sun melts the snow, death bears away those criminals. The afflictions they deserve do not attend their dying hours.
- Ver. 20.—“*The womb shall forget him ; the worm shall feed sweetly on him ; he shall be no more remembered ; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree.*” The idea is here further expressed, that no terrible calamity as a rule attends the great criminal's death. He fades away even from the memory of his mother ; and the worm feeds sweetly on him as on all men. Nor will he be remembered generally as a great criminal.
- Ver. 21.—“*He evil entreateth the barren that beareth not : and doeth not good to the widow.*” The oppressor is here again expressed. Whilst he renders no service to the widow, he is a curse to the barren woman who has no children to comfort her.
- Ver. 22.—“*He draweth also the mighty with his power : he riseth up, and no man is sure of life.*” He, that is God, prolongeth the life of the wicked. He raises him up from suffering, even after his life had been despaired of.
- Ver. 23.—“*Though it be given him to be in safety, whereon he resteth ; yet His eyes are upon their ways.*” “He giveth him rest, and he is sustained, and His eyes are over their ways.”—*Delitzsch*. Job's idea seems to be, that God, instead of punishing those criminals, blesses them so far as this life is concerned.
- Ver. 24.—“*They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low ; they are taken out of the way as all other, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.*” This was the proposition which Job maintained. His friends affirmed that the wicked were punished in this world, and that great crimes would meet with great calamities. This Job denies, and says that on the contrary the wicked were exalted, although only for a “little while.”
- Ver. 25.—“*And if it be not so now, who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth ?*” “This is a challenge to any one to prove the contrary to what he had said. Job had now attacked their main position, and had appealed to facts in defence of what he held. He maintained that, as a matter of fact, the wicked were prospered, that they often lived to old age, and that they then died a peaceful death without any direct demonstration of the divine displeasure. He boldly appeals to any one to deny this, or to prove the contrary. The appeal was decisive. The fact was undeniable, and the controversy was closed.”—*Barnes*.

HOMILETICS.—The chapter brings under our notice two facts.

I. THAT GREAT CRIMES HAVE PREVAILED ON THE EARTH FROM EARLIEST TIMES. Amongst the crimes specified in this chapter

there is (1) *theft*. There were those who stole from others their lands and flocks, and robbed the widow and orphan of their food and clothing (verses 2 to 8). There is (2) *cruelty*. "They plucked the fatherless from the breast," made "men groan out of the city." There is (3) *murder*. "The murderer, rising with the light, killeth the poor and needy." There is (4) *adultery*. "The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight," etc. These are amongst the blackest crimes found on the world's long roll of depravity. The fact that these crimes prevailed in Job's land and times implies,—

First: That in those distant scenes and times *the same standard of morals existed that we have*. They esteemed theft, cruelty, murder, and adultery wrong; so do we. Their law condemned these things; so does ours. It is the law written on all hearts, republished in the Decalogue, and exemplified in Christ.

Secondly: That in those distant scenes and times *men had the same sinful propensities as they have now*. The principles that prompted Job's contemporaries and countrymen to perpetrate those crimes live and work in all unregenerate hearts to this day. Dishonesty, cruelty, lust, where are they? Everywhere. The chapter brings under notice another fact:—

II. THAT ALTHOUGH THE GREAT GOD IS COGNIZANT OF THOSE CRIMES HE DOES NOT ALWAYS VISIT THEM WITH PUNISHMENT IN THIS LIFE. Job begins with the question, "Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know Him not see His days?"

The meaning is, Why, since crimes are not hidden from the Almighty, do not His friends see His judgments? He shows that these great criminals fare as well here, both in life and death, as others. They have a peaceful death, pass quietly away, as the snow melts in the sunbeam. When they are gone the memory of their crime gradually fades away even from the mind of the mother. In fact they are often prosperous in life and peaceful in death, they have no bands in their death. Why is this? Not because the Almighty is ignorant of their crimes, or because their crimes are not abhorrent to His nature. Whatever the cause, the fact is undeniable; and this fact Job

brings out here to refute the doctrine of his friends, viz., that great suffering implies great crime.

To this Eliphaz and Zophar make no further reply, they are silent. Bildad only, in the next chapter, makes one more feeble effort.

Sermonic Glances at the Gospel of St. John.

As our purpose in the treatment of this Gospel is purely the development, in the briefest and most suggestive form, of Sermonio outlines, we must refer our readers to the following works for all critical inquiries into the author and authorship of the book, and also for any minute criticisms on difficult clauses. The works we shall especially consult are:—"Introduction to New Testament," by Bleek; "Commentary on John," by Tholuck; "Commentary on John," by Hengstenberg; "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels," by Westcott; "The Gospel History," by Ebrard; "Our Lord's Divinity," by Liddon; "St. John's Gospel," by Oosterwee; "Doctrine of the Person of Christ," by Dorner; Lange; etc., etc.

Subject: The Woman taken in Adultery.

"And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto Him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, they say unto Him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest Thou? This they said, tempting Him, that they might have to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground, as though He heard them not. So when they continued asking Him, He lifted up Himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again He stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up Himself, and saw none but the woman, He said unto her, Woman, where are those thine

accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."—JOHN viii. 3-11.

EXPOSITION.—On the question of the genuineness of this paragraph we cannot do better than by presenting our readers with a summary of the arguments as given by Dr. Farrar: "I. ARGUMENTS AGAINST ITS GENUINENESS.—(1) It is not found in some of the best and oldest MSS.; (2) nor in most of the Fathers (*e.g.*, Origen, Cyril, Chrysostom, Theophylact, Tertullian, Cyprian); (3) nor in many ancient versions (*e.g.*, Sahidic, Coptic, and Gothic); (4) in other MSS. it is marked with *obelii* and asterisks, or a space is left for it, or it is inserted elsewhere; (5) it contains an extraordinary number of various readings ('variant singula fere verba in codicibus plerisque.'—*Tischendorf*); (6) it contains several expressions not elsewhere found in St. John; and (7) it differs widely in some respects,—particularly in the constant use of the connecting *δέ*,—from the style of St. John throughout the rest of the Gospel. Several of these arguments are weakened, (i.) by the fact that the diversities of readings may be reduced to three main recensions; (ii.) that the rejection of the passage may have been due to a false dogmatical bias; (iii.) that the silence of some of the Fathers may be accidental, and of others prudential. II. ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF ITS GENUINENESS.—(1) It is found in some old and important uncials, and in more than 300 cursive MSS., in some of the Itala, and in the Vulgate; (2) The tendencies which led to its deliberate rejection would have rendered all but impossible its invention or interpolation; (3) It is quoted by Augustine, Ambrose, and Jerome, and treated as genuine in the Apostolic Constitutions. St. Jerome's testimony is particularly important, because he says that in his time it was found 'in multis et Græcis et Latinis codicibus,' and it must be remembered that nearly all of these must have been considerably older than any which we now possess. The main facts to be observed are, that though the dogmatic bias against the passage might be sufficient to account for its rejection, it gives us no help in explaining its want of resemblance to the style of St. John. A very simple hypothesis will account for all difficulties. If we suppose that the story of the woman accused before our Lord of many sins,—to which Eusebius alludes as existing in the Gospel of the Hebrews,—is identical with this, we may suppose without any improbability, either (i.) that St. John (as Alford hesitatingly suggests) may here have adopted a portion of current synoptic tradition, or (ii.) that the story may have been derived originally from Papias, the pupil of St. John, and having found its way into the Gospel of the Hebrews, may have been adopted gradually into some MSS. of St. John's gospel. Many recent writers adopt the suggestion of Holtzmann, that it belongs to the '*Ur-marcus*,' or ground doctrine of the Synoptists. Whoever embodied into the

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Gospels this traditionally remembered story deserved well of the world." *

Ver. 3.—“*And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto Him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst.*” These scribes and Pharisees had tried to entrap Him before, but were foiled. A death penalty was involved in the act here charged against the woman. We may therefore suppose that the Sanhedrim moved now in the matter.

Ver. 4.—“*They say unto Him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.*” Alford's reading of this verse is as follows: “The priests say unto Him, tempting Him that they might have to accuse Him, Master, this woman hath been taken in adultery, in the very act.”

Ver. 5.—“*Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest Thou?*” *ὁ οὖν τι λέγεις*, “What now sayest Thou?”

Ver. 6.—“*This they said, tempting Him, that they might have to accuse Him.*” That is, putting Him to a test in order to have ground for accusation against Him. They thought that their question was such that, whatever answer He gave, He would involve Himself in guilt. If He said, “Stone her,” they would charge Him with assuming a political authority that did not belong to Him. If He said, “Let her alone, do nothing with her,” they would charge Him with encouraging immorality and abrogating their law. “*But Jesus stooped down,*”—He was in a sitting posture before,—“*and with His finger wrote on the ground.*” This gesture was familiar to antiquity as a representation of deep thinking, languor, or absence of mind (see the representation in Lütké, page 269). Perhaps by the act Christ meant to express disregard of their question. “*As though He heard them not.*” This clause is not in the original, it is supplied by our translators. It should be struck out, as it conveys the idea that Christ meant to deceive.

Ver. 7.—“*So when they continued asking Him, He lifted up Himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.*” “Without sin.” Without this sin, in spirit if not in act; and whose conscience acquits him of any such sin, let him cast the first stone. Thus He turns the tables upon them. Under the law (Deut. xvii. 7) the stone in such a case was to be hurled by the witnesses of the guilt; and this in order that they might feel the responsibility of giving evidence.

Ver. 8.—“*And again He stooped down, and wrote on the ground.*” What wrote He? No one knows. Did He stoop and write merely to give the accusers of this woman an opportunity to slink away unobserved? Probably so. Anyhow they availed themselves of the occasion.

* See “*Life of Christ*,” by Dr. Farrar, vol. ii., p. 62.

Ver. 9.—“*And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one.*” It is historically stated that at this time many prominent Rabbis were living in adultery, hence the words of Christ caused them to be convicted by their own conscience. “*Beginning at the eldest,*” or rather at the elders in the official sense, and not the seniors in age. One by one they slunk away. They did not dare to wait until Christ rose from His bent attitude and looked lightning and spoke thunder to them. “*And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.*” Only the band of accusers ran away, the disciples and the people probably remained and were looking on. Why did not the accused run away? Christ had His grasp upon her conscience, she felt chained to His judgment-seat.

Ver. 10, 11.—“*When Jesus had lifted up Himself, and saw none but the woman, He said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.*” “What inimitable tenderness and grace! Conscious of her own guilt, and till now in the hands of men who had talked of stoning her, wondering at the skill with which her accusers had been dispersed, and the grace of the few words addressed to herself, she would be disposed to listen, with a reverence and teachableness before unknown, to our Lord’s admonition. Jesus pronounces no pardon upon the woman, like ‘Thy sins be forgiven thee,’ ‘Go in peace,’ much less does He say that she had done nothing condemnable. He simply leaves the matter where it was. He meddles not with the magistrate’s office, nor acts the judge in any sense. But in saying ‘Go, and sin no more,’ which had been before said to one who undoubtedly believed (chap. v. 14), more is probably implied than expressed. If brought suddenly to conviction of sin, to admiration of her Deliverer, and to a willingness to be admonished and guided by Him, this call to begin a new life may have carried with it what would ensure and naturally bring about a permanent change.”—*Dr. Brown.*

HOMILETICS.—Amongst the thoughts which this wonderful narrative suggests, there are three worthy of notice, which are true whether the narrative is genuine or not.

I. That the **VILEST SINNERS ARE OFTEN THE GREATEST ACCUSERS.** Were there a worse lot of men in Judea or on the round earth than these scribes and Pharisees, and members of the Sanhedrim, who now accused this woman? It is ever so: the more base and corrupt a man is, the more ready to charge crimes on others and the more severe in his censures.

II. That the **SEVEREST JUDGE OF SINNERS IS THEIR OWN CONSCIENCE.** “They which heard Him, being convicted by

their own conscience, went out one by one." Observe two things—

First: *Christ's method of awakening their conscience.*

(1) He expresses by a symbolical act His superiority over their malignant purposes. He stoops down as if He were utterly indifferent. (2) He puts the question of the woman's punishment upon their *own* consciences. "He that is without sin," etc. Observe—

Secondly: *The force of their awakened consciences.* They were convicted, and went out one by one. Ah! there is no judge so severe and crushing in his sentence as that of a guilty conscience.

III. That THE GREATEST FRIEND OF SINNERS IS JESUS CHRIST. The accusers are gone, but the accused remains with Jesus alone. Observe—

First: *He declines pronouncing a judicial condemnation upon her.* "Neither do I condemn thee." He does not mean that He did not disapprove of her conduct and condemn her morally, but judicially. He declines to pronounce judgment. Observe—

Secondly: *He discharges her with a merciful admonition.*

"Go, and sin no more." An expression, this, implying (1) That she had sinned. Adultery is a terrible moral crime. (2) That He forgave her. "Go." I absolve thee. (3) That her future should be free from sin. "Sin no more." Let bygones be bygones; let oblivion cover thy past; let virtue crown thy future. Thus Jesus deals with sinners. Desolate, branded, forsaken of all, He alone will stand by thee.*

A COLD PREACHER.—His admired discourses remind me of the coloured shavings with which we fill empty grates in the summer time. But to understand my comparison fully, you must suppose that it is not summer with you, but keenly practical winter weather, and that you enter a room seeking a fire, and find, not a fire but only a grate, and in that grate coloured shavings!—*Lynch.*

* For an amplification of these thoughts, see *Homilet*, Series III., vol. ix., page 166.

Germs of Thought.

Subject: Heaven's Hallelujah Chorus.

"And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy," etc.—Rev. xv. 8, 4.

MODERN science is largely engaged in speculating upon man's physical genesis—about man as he *was*; while the Old Testament Scriptures settle those points satisfactorily to most devout minds, and the New Testament speaks fully and clearly of what man *is to be*. The Apocalypse of St. John is to show us, among many other things, *the final triumph of goodness in the universe of God*, and the final and full glorification of the nature of man. Like streaks of morning cloud we shall *not* melt away into the infinite azure of the past. Paradise *was* lost, but Paradise *has been* regained; and in the end immortal love shall triumph over all evil, and God shall be all in all. We come to notice the song of the harpers on the glassy sea, and will indicate in outline the subjects which enter into this song of Moses and the Lamb. The song is addressed to God, and may be called the great *Hallelujah Chorus of heaven*, for what God is in *Himself* in *His works* and in *His ways*. We have then—

I. HEAVEN'S HALLELUJAH CHORUS TO GOD, FOR WHAT HE IS IN HIMSELF. The harpers praise God for (a) *His holiness*. "For Thou only art holy:" only God is absolutely holy. To convey to our minds an idea of God's spotless holiness, we are told that the heavens are not clean in His sight, and that He charges even the angels with folly. All the holiness,—as all the happiness in the universe,—is derived from Him, as its *sole* eternal spring. God is *Holy Love*. On earth, vice and wrong are often praised and crowned; but in heaven, holiness is crowned and adored. Let us endeavour to antedate the coronation now,—

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
 Gratefully adoring, our songs would rise to Thee.
 Only Thou art holy, merciful, and mighty,
 God in Three Persons, Blessed Trinity."

The harpers praise God for (β) *His worthiness*. "Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name?" God will not be adored because He demands adoration, He will not be revered because He has struck terror into the hearts of His foes. The worship of heaven will be *voluntary* worship, the worship of love and free will. The fear with which the heavenly hosts will sing, will be a *filial* and not a slavish fear. The name of the Lord shall be exalted above every name, His new best name of Love! God shall be seen as not only the greatest, but as the *best* and the most glorious of beings.

II. HEAVEN'S HALLELUJAH CHORUS TO GOD FOR WHAT HE IS IN HIS WORKS. "Great and marvellous are Thy works." (α) "*Great*." The world of nature, revealed to our naked eye, impresses us with the stupendousness of the works of God, great in wisdom, goodness, and power. But when we avail ourselves of the aid of the telescope and microscope, new worlds are revealed to us, and the greatness of the works of God overwhelms us. What must it be to witness in heaven, —with the capacities of the soul enlarged,—the *magnitude* and *multitude* of the works of God in addition to what can be seen on earth! If the works of the Lord on earth, which is but His footstool, are so great, what must His works be in heaven, which is His throne! The harpers acknowledge that God's works are (β) "*marvellous*." Moses told of the work of *Creation*; the Lamb, of the work of *Redemption*; and the wonders connected with each are blended together in the choros of the sky. In the natural government and moral government of God there are *similar* mysteries and wonders. Creation and Redemption are both marvellous, for their author is the same infinite and eternal Lord. Wonder will mingle with the worship of the sky, as it mingles with the worship of earth. The finite can never fully comprehend the infinite, for

"A God alone can comprehend a God."

The themes of Creation and Redemption,—the song of Moses and the Lamb,—will never be exhausted, never worn out; the harpers on the glassy sea will sing their Hallelujah Chorus, and it will never become *tame*, and *they* will never become *tired*. The works of God will appear *increasingly* great and marvellous for ever and for ever.

III. HEAVEN'S HALLELUJAH CHORUS TO GOD FOR WHAT HE IS IN HIS WAYS. "Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints," (a) "*Just.*" The saints on earth believe that the ways of God are just; but here we know only in part, and often the ways of God *seem* to us very mysterious. To our limited sight there often appear strange discrepancies and anomalies in the providence of the Most High. It is easy to be satisfied and settled in our faith while we shut our eyes and ears to everything but what is on our side; but when with *inquiring* minds we reflect upon the natural and moral phenomena around and within us, and *reason* upon sin, and sorrow, and death, we want some window out of which we can look from the present, some door out of which we can go for relief;—and, here, *heaven* comes to our relief, and we learn that when the day of Eternity shall dawn upon the night of Time the mysteries of earth shall be cleared up, and all the ways of God shall be declared,—and seen to be,—"*just.*" In this world we hear the tuning of the instruments for the heavenly concert, we see but little bits of the great and sublime drama of Time; in the *end* it will be seen, that all the ways of God,—in what He *permitted*, and in what He *prevented*, and in what He *purposed*,—*all* were just, all for the happiness, and especially the *holiness*, of man, and the glory of His holy name. And then the harpers praise God because His ways are (β) "*True.*" From the beginning God has never falsified His word, has never broken His promise. The promise that the seasons should not cease to revolve in their annual round; the promise that in the fulness of time the great Deliverer should come; the promise that the glory of the Lord should be revealed, and that all flesh should see it together; the promise that death should be swallowed up in victory, and

that all the holy and good should be for ever with the Lord—all fulfilled; and the harpers praise the Lord, not only that He is "just," but that He is "*true*."

Certainly, then, with respect to the tragedy of Time, the end thereof shall be better and brighter than the beginning! Evil shall not always reign,—the time shall come when it shall be seen, and joyfully proclaimed, that *goodness has triumphed in the universe of God!* The end of this tremendous, and as yet uninterpreted, riddle of life shall show that the Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer of man is *Love!* If I can only hope and believe that, when I have solved the mystery of death, I shall join the harpers on the glassy sea, and unite in the Hallelujah Chorus of the text, I can *work and wait, serve and suffer*; I am content. It shall then be seen "that the cries and sobs of mortality are but as one faint jarring note in an eternity of song." The song of Moses and the Lamb gathers up the *two dispensations*, and *all time*. The Jewish and Christian Churches *one* in heaven! Believers,—from every quarter of the world, and of all time,—met together in one happy home, and uniting in one triumphant song.

We must learn the chorus *here*. Have our souls tuned *here*. We must believe in Moses and the Lamb, in the truths they taught. Our *lips* and our *lives* must praise God in the Church *Militant*; then, hereafter, we shall sing the great Hallelujah Chorus in the Church *Triumphant*.

Bristol.

F. W. BROWN.

Subject: Investigation the Way to Faith.

"Come and see."—JOHN i. 39, 46.

THIS invitation, falling first from the gracious lips of our Saviour, and afterwards echoed by one of His earliest disciples, at once suggests and illustrates much teaching about personal search into the verities of our holy religion; in other words, about individual investigation into the reality of Christianity. We are reminded of much that belongs to such investigation in its varied developments.

I. THE INVESTIGATION BY WHICH HIS EARLY FOLLOWERS GAINED FAITH IN CHRIST'S MISSION. The two young men whose attention had been directed to the Great Teacher of Nazareth, are invited by Him to go to His dwelling, or rather His temporary resting-place; for home on earth He had none. And they spend many hours, probably the whole night, with Him, coming away with the clear deep conviction that shaped all their future, "We have found the Messiah." He had nothing to conceal. The more they knew of Him, the clearer would His glories shine. In this He was at once a *contrast* to most of the would-be heroes of the world, and an *example* to all who would be its teachers.

II. THE INVESTIGATION BY WHICH STUDENTS OF HIS BIOGRAPHY GAIN FAITH IN CHRIST'S CHARACTER. We have in the records of the four Evangelists, and in the sermons and letters of the Apostles, abundant material for the most thorough and exhaustive acquaintance with our Lord's character. A right investigation will prove it to be (1) *original*, (2) *beautiful*, (3) *perfect*.

III. THE INVESTIGATION BY WHICH STUDENTS OF HISTORY GAIN FAITH IN CHRIST'S INFLUENCE. The true readers of history will find on its pages "a series of majestic facts," that will testify (1) to the *mightiness*, (2) to the *beneficialness*, of Christ's influence in the world.

IV. THE INVESTIGATION BY WHICH INQUIRERS FOR PERSONAL SALVATION GAIN FAITH IN CHRIST HIMSELF. Personal salvation is effected by a practical faith in a Personal Christ. Not by a merely theoretic faith even in Him, nor even by an energetic faith in teachings about Him; but in such a vitalizing faith in Himself as involves love to the Lord, reveals hatred of the sin from which He redeems, care for the race He represents, imitation of the goodness He incarnated. This faith can only be possessed by those who hold (1) *intelligent*, (2) *devout*, (3) *constant* communion with Him. We must not judge only by the testimony of others, nor even by the assertions of Scripture. "Believe, and then shalt be saved." If you would know whether Jesus Christ can deliver from the power

of sin, whether He can console in trouble, whether He can strengthen for duty, whether He can protect in temptation, whether He can guide in perplexity, "Come, and see." "O taste and see that the Lord is gracious."

Bristol.

URIJAH R. THOMAS.

Subject: Precious Seeds.

"Light is sown for the righteous."—PSALM xevii. 11.

IN dwelling upon these words I shall notice

I. The SEED, "light."

The preciousness of this figure is seen as we reflect (1) upon the quality of the seed, "light." "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light." That which dispels mists and shadows, and reveals realities, is the *seed*. [(2) In the idea of increase involved in the fact, "light is sown;" and (3) In the amount of this precious seed that is sown. Through the entire field of probation, from the gate of responsible action, in every direction, clear back to the river of death that rolls at the extreme end, "light is sown."

II. The SOWERS, implied in the fact, "Light is sown."

First: God was the first being to scatter this precious seed. Dwelling in the midst of the unlocked granaries of "light" in regard to Himself, and the universe, and especially in regard to the great scheme of salvation, He soon commenced to scatter the seed, which was caught up and disseminated more widely by "holy men of old who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." It would seem that God could not scatter this seed into all the dark chilly corners of our moral nature without becoming identified with humanity and dwelling in mortal flesh, thus giving Him the unique advantage of both human and Divine hands in scattering the "light."

Secondly: "Light is sown by the righteous," (1) for his own good, (2) for the good of others.

Sometimes we have got to sow our own "light." Little irregularities, follies, or besetments may be persisted in till

we are made to see, by the light of experience, that they are deceptive and damaging.

Thirdly: Light is sown for the righteous by the wicked. (1) By wicked nations. French Revolution, the result of the infidelity and atheism of France. (2) By wicked men. The sensuality, want, destitution, misery of the multitude who forget God, is light revealing to the righteous the blessedness of his choice. That young man with chained limbs, and in the grip of the officer, who is taking him to the state prison, is sowing light on the slippery places and awful snares of sin.

III. The PERSONS for whom the sowing is done. "The righteous," not the half-hearted, worldly, or hypocritical professor, but the man whose purpose in the right is a whole purpose, and who stands before his own conscience and his God in the full honours of rectitude. Such a man, no matter where he may be, is surrounded with growing light. "His path is that of the just, shining more and more." He sees the foot-prints of others who have gone before and gloriously triumphed over every foe. He sees that goodness, not greatness, is the condition of success in life. As he nears the Jordan of death he sees how others have triumphed over death. Thus "light is sown."

America.

T. KELLY.

SERMONIC NOTES ON THE VISIONS OF EZEKIEL.

No. XXI.

Subject: The Name of the City; God's Presence the full Blessedness of His People.

Chapter xlvii. 13-23; xlviii., chiefly verse 35.

HERE we have the acme of prophetic hope, just as in some visions of the earlier half of this book we had the lowest depths of prophetic terror and curse. For we have already noticed that this prophecy of Ezekiel, while it is "the last expiring cry of the Jewish monarchy," is, like the fabled cry of the dying swan, a noble song as well as a cry. From his captivity, and from the midst of visions of his country's

desolations that must have seemed to him as the very "suburbs of hell," it was given him to gaze upon, and to paint for his hearers, the glorious future that was hovering over the true Israel of God. That Israel is to be folded in safety by a True Shepherd; is to be, spiritually as a man in robust and vigorous health, for "a new heart and a new spirit" shall be given; is to be, in the completeness of its revival, "an exceeding great army," quickened to life by mystic breath "from the four winds," and is to go forth to conquer in a terrific struggle with the "Gog and Magog" of heathenism; is to become a vast and perfect "Temple;" is to be blessed and to bless others by a "river" of healing waters. But its highest glory is revealed in the two last words of the book, for it is to be as a country the name of whose city is Jehovah Shammah, "the Lord is there." Whatever may be the necessary modification of the translation of this word, "Jehovah Shammah," which probably should be rendered "Jehovah thither," and means that, according to an old promise in Deuteronomy, God continually turns His eye and His heart to the city, the truth taught is easily understood from our English text. The Lord will surely Himself be where His heart and eye so continually are; and the glory and blessedness of this city consist in the certainty of the Divine Presence. Its name, that which is its boast, that which marks it off from others, that which describes its life and circumstances, is "Jehovah Shammah."

Now, in the allotment of the land to the tribes, and the construction and naming of the city with which this closing vision is taken up, there may be several *local and temporary significations*. It may be that, as in some other of the visions, there is (a) first of all reference to the rapidly nearing national and religious *restoration of the Jews under the leadership of Zerubbabel, and Ezra and Nehemiah*. But the spirit-stirring events that are associated with the names of these patriot heroes, while they fulfil very much that Ezekiel foresaw, could not have exhausted the meaning of these predictions. For such a city was never built, the blessedness here

never perfectly enjoyed by the Jews at any captivity. Moreover, if we take the literal country and previously of the temple we are assured, by the measurement of simply Canaan within Jordan, and than all ancient Jerusalem, and prince, and priesthood larger described by himself."

out of the prophecy (β)

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a stranger to it. The fig-tree of the

torn up; the bird, refusing to be sheltered

that often would have gathered and sheltered it,

red into the tangled wilderness and the black night.

find further fulfilment of the prophecy in (γ) some

are restoration of Israel. Without again noting the diffi-

culties that seem to stand in the way of the literal interpretation of this as of the earlier visions, we simply and gladly insist that, if there be such national restoration, the glory and blessedness of the people of its city will be in a special manifestation and abiding consciousness of the presence of God.

Meanwhile, all who are true Israelites, who have the promised clean heart and new spirit, who have tasted of the water of life that is offered freely, who are saved by Israel's Messiah, and are the loyal subjects of David's Son and Lord, will find in their experience what is the *universal and lasting* teaching of this vision. They have their fullest blessedness only in whatever can be symbolized to them by a city whose name is "Jehovah Shammah."

I. CHRISTLY MEN HAVE THIS EXPERIENCE IN THE CHURCH. Israel is the Scriptural type of the Church. And we easily

recognise the relationship between the "city of the living God" of which the apostle speaks, and the new Jerusalem John saw, and this city of vision. For in its strong foundation on the Rock, in its vastness, in its beauty and safety as it lies foursquare, in its provision for all the Jewish tribes, and its welcome too to proselytes from the heathen by its gates that open from all sides, we have a material sketch of the spiritual Church of Christ. Any Church that may not truly be called by that name, "Jehovah Shammah," that has not in its worship, and its activities, its social fellowships and philanthropic labours, God's manifested presence, is no Church at all. An ecclesiastical society it may be, a kindly club, a political institution; but a Church it is not. To the Church belongs by special, inalienable right, this name, "Jehovah Shammah," for the Saviour has promised, "Lo, I am with you all days, even unto the end of the world." And He is so surely in the Church, that if the veil be taken off a man's heart, he sees Christ in the tears of the penitent, the gladness of the joyful, the pages of the Scriptures, the bread and the wine of the Lord's Supper, and the water of baptism, the brotherhood of Christian people, and the conversion of sinners. And His chief joy is, not in the size, or splendour, or energetic life of the city,—the Church,—but in this, "The Lord is there."

II. CHRISTLY MEN HAVE THIS EXPERIENCE IN THE AGE. "Jehovah Shammah" is not the name of some fossil city, some old time that has no life in it, some centuries excavated by history, but long since motionless and still. No, it is the name of this century, the name of to-day. God is the God of the living. And to His faithful people the name of the age in which they live is, "the Lord is there." They see this name inscribed (a) on human affairs generally. In all the movements of the time towards liberty and light, in all that tends to lessen human woe and to increase human joy, in a word, in all that is true in art, science, exploration, civilisation, as well as in what is termed religion, God is felt to be moving. God is heard to be speaking to the whole *visional*

city, to the part that, in distinction from the rest, is called "the profane place;" and this name belongs to the whole of human life, in its every land and class and age. There is to the Christly man a keen interest and deep sacredness, for "the Lord is there," (*§*) *in all that concerns individual life*. "All things work together for good." Fear not, I am with thee.

III. CHRISTLY MEN HAVE THIS EXPERIENCE IN NATURE. The opening sentences of Scripture have no meaning more easily understood than this, that God's eye and heart were on creation from the very beginning. When we read, God "saw that it was good," and again, "He saw that it was very good," we learn how certain it is that God cared for what He had made, and how assuredly we may read in the light, and on the waters, and land, and herb, and cattle, and man, at least the inscription, "Jehovah *thither*." But when all Old Testament Scripture implied Jesus Christ by His miracles in the realm of nature and His Lordship over her has illustrated to the Christian eye that the true inscription may well be, not "Jehovah *thither*," but "the Lord is there." Every reader of the prophets and of the Psalms has often felt that to the ear of Hebrew piety, nature was eloquent with the voice of God. Even Greek thought, as it peopled the groves and streams and mountains with divinities, was evidently groping after "the unknown God," whose power upholds all, whose character is revealed in all, whose presence fills all, for "in Him we live and move and have our being." To the Christly man, who dwells much and earnestly on Christ's teaching, who inbreathes Christ's spirit, who imitates, however humbly, Christ's life, the world, not only in its stars, in the skies that span it, or in its seas that roll around it, but in its sparrows and its lilies and its common grass, tells of God. To such a man "every common bush is on fire with God." He feels not only about scenes of lavish luxuriance and places that teem with richest forms of varied loveliness, but about spots the most desolate, with only some grey stone to tell of the unfathomed past, and a sky above to tell of the awful eternities, "Surely God is in this place." To whom is our earth

most beautiful ? I think, not to the agriculturist, who, measuring its acreage and calculating its produce, sees written, "Wealth is there;" nor yet to the mere explorer, botanist, geologist, who simply sees this or that or the other organism there; but to the Christian, who, through all, and above all else, sees, "The Lord is there."

IV. CHRISTLY MEN WILL HAVE THIS EXPERIENCE PERFECTLY IN HEAVEN. Whether designedly or not, John's vision of heaven is inextricably blended with the vision of Ezekiel in the minds of Christian thinkers. There is much that belongs to both in structure and in provision. There are several points of contrast. In Ezekiel's vision the city has a temple; in heaven there is none, for all is temple. In Ezekiel's vision the city is far smaller and less lustrous and of inferior material to that which John saw in the Apocalypse. But there is this in common:—consciousness of God is the great blessedness of both. In heaven, consciousness of the devil will be known no more; the consciousness of others, that through their sin and sorrow and our weakness is often overpoweringly oppressive, will have given way to a happy and strong brotherhood; and consciousness of self, which is born of sin, and is the darkest and most inseparable shadow of our selfishness, will be known no more. God dwells there in an effulgence of love from which none shrink. Christ is the centre of the city, and is so seen that in seeing Him all become like Him. The heavenliness of heaven is not chiefly that beauty is there, or rest, or friends, or glory; but that Christ is there. "He that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more. The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Let us rejoice for those who have gone to heaven, because "the Lord is there."

Bristol.

URIJAH R. THOMAS.

The Preacher's Finger-Post.

**Subject : THE HIGHEST HUMAN
BENEDICTION ON THE HIGH-
EST CLASS OF MEN.**

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen."—Eph. vi. 24.

Elsewhere we have furnished a homiletical exposition of the whole of this epistle.* We take this verse now simply because it brings under our notice the highest moral class found in society, and the highest benediction that man can pronounce on man.

I. THE HIGHEST MORAL CLASS FOUND IN SOCIETY. Who are they? Those "that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Dr. Davidson in his translation substitutes the word incorruption for "sincerity,"—a term more comprehensive. The idea is that of a true or right love. What is it to love Christ rightly?

First: It is to love Him with the most *comprehensive* love. Love Him with the love of *gratitude*, because He is the kindest of beings; with the love of *esteem*, because He is the holiest of beings; with the love of *reverence*, because He is the greatest of beings; with the love of *adoration*, because He is the best of beings; with the love of *benevolence*, because He works for the good of the universe.

Secondly: It is to love Him with the most *supreme* love. Love for Him should be above all other loves, it should be the imperial passion, bringing into captivity every faculty and feeling. His name should be held above every name in the soul.

Thirdly: It is to love Him with the most *abiding* love. It should not be a passing emotion, however strong, but a permanent ever-abiding force. To love Christ thus is to love Him with "sincerity," or with incorruption.

Now the men who thus love Christ are the highest class in society; wherever found, or in whatever secular circumstances they are found, they are the true aristocracy, the *moral nobility*. All other nobilities are, as compared with them, charlatanic and contemptible. They are on earth the *representatives*, the *disciples*, and the *ministers* of Him who is "exalted above all heavens."

II. THE HIGHEST BENEDICTION PRONOUNCED BY SOCIETY. What is that? "Grace be with all." Regard Paul here as the mouthpiece of the most enlightened and generous social "good-will." Man can wish for his fellow-creature nothing higher than "grace,"

* See *Homilist*, Editor's Series, vol. ii.

that is Divine love, Divine favour. Men are constantly pouring benedictions on their fellows, and that for different reasons. They have a blessing for warriors, for statesmen, for rulers, for money-makers, for authors, for inventors, etc. But there is no class of men on whom they can pronounce blessings with greater honour to themselves than on those "who love our Lord Jesus Christ."

First: It is the most *justly deserved*. All that love the Lord Jesus Christ deserve this benediction. "All," whatever their social grade, rich or poor, high or low; all, whatever their theological creed, Calvinian or Arminian; all, whatever their ecclesiastical sect, Catholic or Protestant, Conformists or Nonconformists. There are those of "all creeds and Churches who love the Lord Jesus Christ;" and this love is the virtuous, valuable, morally imperial thing. Blessings on all who have it!

Secondly: It is the most *universally demanded*. All people should pronounce this benediction on this class. *Philosophers* should do it, because no class contributes more to the love of inquiry and research. *Politicians* should do it, because no class are such efficient promoters of civil order, freedom, and good government. *Philanthropists* should do it, because no class are such ardent, indefatigable,

unremitting, and efficient labourers in the cause of humanity.

Subject: THE GLORY OF A TRULY GOOD MAN.

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world."—1 JOHN v. 4.

This short utterance leads us to consider the distinguishing glory of a really true man.

I. HE HAS THE HIGHEST MORAL PEDIGREE. In conventional society there are fools who pride themselves in their ancestry, although their ancestry, in a moral sense, were notoriously ignorant, inhuman, and despicable. The Cæsars were villains, and yet the men who here in England can prove that they came down from their loins, move as if they were gods on the earth. The good man, however, has the strongest reason for exultation in considering his ancestry. He is "born of God." Born, of course, in a moral sense. He has been regenerated, made a new creature in Christ Jesus.

First: *In him there is a moral resemblance to the Greatest Being.* As the human offspring partakes of the nature of his parent, so the good man partakes of the moral character of God, a character loving, pure, just. He is "changed into the same image."

Secondly: *Over him there*

is the tenderest care of the Greatest Being. "As a father pitieth his children," etc.

Thirdly: In him there is the most loyal devotion to the Greatest Being. He loves the "Most High" supremely, constantly, practically. What are the most illustrious princes of the earth in pedigree, compared to that of a truly good man, however indigent in secular circumstances, obscure in social life?

II. HEACHIEVES THE HIGHEST MORAL CONQUEST. He overcomes the world. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." What is meant by the world here? Not the physical world, not the scientific world, not the commercial world, nor the artistic world. The world here is used to designate the mighty aggregate of moral evil that is found on this earth. It means, in one word, sin in every form. Now, a good man overcomes this. He conquers errors, lusts; he overcomes bad habits and reforms corrupt institutions. He overcomes the world. Who is the greatest conqueror? Not the man who lays the greatest number of human beings dead upon the battle field, but the man who crushes the largest amount of moral evil.*

* Remarks on latter clause of the verse will be found in *Homilist*, Series III., vol. ix., page 42.

Subject: CHRISTIANITY A TRANSCENDENTAL SYSTEM.

"And He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."—Rev. xxii. 1.

Philosophers have their transcendental theories, but Christianity transcends their highest speculations. Taking the text as a symbolic representation of it,—which we are justified in doing,—we make two remarks.

I. It is transcendental in its VALUE. It is "water." What on earth, what throughout the whole material universe, so far as we know, is of such worth as water? So impressed were some of the greatest sages of antiquity with its value that they regarded it as the first principle, the fountal source of all things. But what is the character of this water?

First: It is a "river." It is not a stagnant pool, a sleeping lake, or a purling brook; but a river, profound in depth, majestic in volume, resistless in movement.

Secondly: It is a "pure" river. No impurities have been drained into it. Its channels are clean. It is fresh and pure from the holy heavens. How pure is Christianity! How holy its morals, how morally perfect its leading character—Christ!

Thirdly: It is a pure river of life. It not only diffuses

of sin, whether He can console in trouble, whether He can strengthen for duty, whether He can protect in temptation, whether He can guide in perplexity, "Come and see." "O taste and see that the Lord is gracious."

Bristol.

URIJAH R. THOMAS.

Subject: Precious Seeds.

"Light is sown for the righteous."—PSALM xcvii. 11.

IN dwelling upon these words I shall notice
I. The SEED, "light."

The preciousness of this figure is seen as we reflect (1) upon the quality of the seed, "light." "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light." That which dispels mists and shadows, and reveals realities, is the *seed*. [(2) In the idea of increase involved in the fact, "light is sown;" and (3) In the amount of this precious seed that is sown. Through the entire field of probation, from the gate of responsible action, in every direction, clear back to the river of death that rolls at the extreme end, "light is sown."

II. The SOWERS, implied in the fact, "Light is sown."

First: God was the first being to scatter this precious seed. Dwelling in the midst of the unlocked granaries of "light" in regard to Himself, and the universe, and especially in regard to the great scheme of salvation, He soon commenced to scatter the seed, which was caught up and disseminated more widely by "holy men of old who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." It would seem that God could not scatter this seed into all the dark chilly corners of our moral nature without becoming identified with humanity and dwelling in mortal flesh, thus giving Him the unique advantage of both human and Divine hands in scattering the "light."

Secondly: "Light is sown by the righteous," (1) for his own good, (2) for the good of others.

Sometimes we have got to sow our own "light." Little irregularities, follies, or besetments may be persisted in till

Seeds of Sermons from the Minor Prophets.

If the Bible as a whole is inspired, it is of vast importance that all its Divine ideas should be brought to bear upon the living world of men. Though the pulpit is the organ Divinely intended for this work, it has been doing it hitherto in a miserably partial and restricted method. It selects isolated passages, and leaves whole chapters and books for the most part untouched. Its conduct to the Minor Prophets may be taken as a case in point. How seldom are they resorted to for texts! and yet they abound with splendid passages throbbing with Divine ideas. It is our purpose to go through this section of the Holy Word; selecting, however, only such verses in each chapter and book as seem the most suggestive of truths of the most vital interest and universal application.

Having passed rapidly through HOSHA, JOEL, and AMOS, we come now to OBADIAH. Of the history of Obadiah we literally know nothing. His name, which signifies Worshipper of Jehovah, and his short prophecy afford the only information concerning him. From verses 11 to 14, which undoubtedly contain an allusion to the exultation of the Edomites over the capture and plunder of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. In all probability he must have lived near the time of Jeremiah; and indeed there is almost a verbal agreement between his utterance in verses 1 to 8 and those contained in Jeremiah xlix. If we suppose his prophecy was delivered between the year B.C. 688, when Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldeans, and the termination of the siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, we shall not be far wrong. As to his prophecy, it is the *shortest* in the Bible: one chapter comprehends all. Its *subject* is the destruction of Edom on account of its cruelty to Judah, Edom's mother, and the restoration of the Jews. Its *style* is marked by animation, regularity, and clearness.

No. CIX.

Subject: PRIDE.

"Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen: thou art greatly despised. The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord. If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou cut off!) would they not have stolen till they had enough? if the grape-gatherers came to thee, would they not leave some grapes?"—OBAD. i. 2-6.

These words may be taken as suggesting and illustrating one of the chief sins of all sinners, viz., *pride*, that which poets

tell us "peoples hell and holds its prisoners there." The words suggest three facts in relation to pride.

I. That THE MOST DESPICABLE PEOPLE ARE OFTEN THE MOST DISPOSED TO PRIDE. Edom, which is charged with the sin of pride, is here described as "small among the heathen" and "greatly despised." Not only were they a small people, small comparatively in numbers, wealth, and influence, but despised. They became contemptible in the estimation of their contemporaries. Small things and small men are not always despicable, for God made the small as well as the great. It is the moral character that creates and deserves contempt.

Now, small and disdainable as were these Edomites, they were nevertheless *proud*. It

is often if not ever so. The smaller the men the more disposed to pride. The man small in *body* is often swollen out with ideas of the comeliness of his corporeity; the man small in *intellect* is the same. The men who rate themselves as great thinkers, scholars, authors, preachers, are invariably small-brained men. Men of great intellect and lofty genius are characteristically humble. An old writer has observed that "where the river is the deepest the water glides the smoothest. Empty casks sound most; whereas the well-fraught vessel silences its own sound. As the shadow of the sun is largest when his beams are lowest: so we are always least when we make ourselves the greatest."

Another thought suggested is,—

II. That PRIDE EVERMORE DISPOSES TO SELF-DECEPTION AND PRESUMPTION. (1) *To self-deception*. "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee." Pride is a wonderful artist, it magnifies the small, it beautifies the ugly, it honours the ignoble, it makes the truly little, ugly, contemptible man appear large, handsome, dignified in his own eyes. It is said that Accius, the poet, who was a dwarf, would have himself painted as tall and commanding in stature. In truth, it makes the man who is a devil at heart appear to himself a saint. Witness the Pharisee in the Temple. Such is the law of pride (2) *To presumption*. "Thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?" The Edomites are here taunted with

the confidence that they placed in their lofty and precipitous mountain, and the insolence with which they scouted any attempt to subdue them. A proud man always presumes on strength, reputation, and resources which he has not. Whilst he stands on quicksand he fancies himself on a rock. "Thou sayest thou art rich and increased in goods, and hast need of nothing, whereas," etc. Ah! self-deception and presumption are the twin offspring of pride.

III. THAT THE MOST STRENUOUS EFFORTS TO AVOID PUNISHMENT DUE TO PRIDE WILL PROVE FUTILE. Two things are taught here concerning its punishment,—(1) *Its certainty*. "Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord." Here these sinners are assured by a bold hyperbole, that whatever attempts they made to avoid retribution, they would fail. If, like the eagle, they towered high up into the air, far up among the clouds, nestled among the stars, and made the clouds their footstool, the fowler of retribution would bring them down. All attempts on behalf of the impenitent sinner to avoid punishment must fail when the day for justice to do its work has come. (2) *Its completeness*. "If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou cut off!) would they not have stolen till they had enough? if the grape-gatherers came to thee, would they not leave some grapes?" The spoliation which thou shalt suffer shall not be such as that which thieves cause, bad as that

is; for these, when they have seized enough, or all they can get in a hurry, leave the rest—nor such as grape-gatherers cause in a vineyard, for they, when they have gathered most of the grapes, leave gleanings behind—but it shall be utter, so as to leave thee nothing. The exclamation “how art thou cut off!” bursting in amidst the words of the image, marks strongly excited feeling. The contrast between Edom, where no gleanings shall be left, and Israel, where at the worst a gleaner is left, is striking. (Isa. xvii. 6; xxiv. 13.) Retribution strips the sinner of everything, nothing is left but sheer existence, and that existence intolerable.

CONCLUSION.—Beware of pride then. The primal cause of all sin, all pain, and all woe to come, the great fountain-head of evil, is pride. It must lead to ruin. “Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

“He that is proud eats up himself.

Pride is

His own glass, his own trumpet,
his own chronicle,

And whatever praises itself but in
The deed, devours the deed in the
praise.” *Shakspeare.*

NO. CX.

Subject: GOD IN RETRIBUTION.

“How are the things of Esau searched out! how are his hidden things sought up! All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee even to the border: the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, and prevailed against thee; they that eat thy bread have laid a wound under thee: there is

none understanding in him. Shall I not in that day, saith the Lord, even destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau? And thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter.”—OBAD. i. 6-9.

Man is essentially a dependent being. The ineradicable and ever-operative sense of his dependence urges him to lean his being on some object for rest and safety. His sin is, that he puts his confidence on objects unworthy and unsafe. “Some trust in chariots, some in horses,” etc. The Edomites, it is suggested here, trusted to the insecure. Here we have God in retribution, *destroying the grounds of the sinner's confidence.*

I. Did they trust to their MATERIAL DEFENCES: these were worthless. “How are the things of Esau searched out! how are his hidden things sought up!” The reference is to the hiding-places to which they resorted in cases of danger. The country of the Edomites was pre-eminently favourable for such concealment and shelter. The cities of Edom consisted of houses mostly cut in the rocks. “The great feature of the mountains of Edom is the mass of red bald-headed sandstone rocks, intersected, not by valleys, but by deep seams. In the heart of these rocks, itself invisible, lies Petra.”—*Stanley.* “Petra is unique. The whole Edomite country from Eleutheropolis to Petra and Selah hath small habitation (*habitationcules*) in caves. And on account of the oppressive heat of the sun, as

being a southern province, hath underground cottages. Hence the aborigines whom Edom expelled were called Horites—*i.e.*, dwellers in caves." Nations may trust to their material defences, their armies, navies, fortifications; but they are as stubble to the raging fire when justice begins its work. Individuals may trust to their wealth, to material science and medical skill, to preserve their bodily lives; but when justice sends forth its emissary—death—what are these defences? Nothing, less than nothing, vanity.

II. Did they trust to their PLEDGED CONFEDERATES: these were worthless. "All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee even to the border: the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, and prevailed against thee; they that eat thy bread have laid a wound under thee: there is none understanding in him." Those confederates were probably Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon, with whom the Edomites joined in resisting Nebuchadnezzar; but these failed them, probably turned against them; and even their friends who were at peace with them and ate their bread deceived them in their hour of trial. "To no quarter could the Idumeans look for aid. Their allies, their neighbours, their very dependants, so far from assisting them, would act treacherously towards them, and employ every means, both of an open and covert nature, to effect their ruin." How often it happens, that when men get into adverse circumstances, their old allies, professed friends, those

who have often partaken of their hospitality, not only fail them but turn against them. "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm." He that trusteth even on his firmest friends leaneth on a broken reed.

III. Did they trust to the WISDOM OF THEIR GREAT MEN: this was worthless. "Shall I not in that day, saith the Lord, even destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau?" "The Idumeans confided not only in the natural strength of their country, but in the superiority of their intellectual talent. That they excelled in the arts and sciences is abundantly proved by the numerous traces of them in the Book of Job, which was undoubtedly written in their country. They were indeed proverbial for their philosophy, for the cultivation of which their intercourse with Babylon and Egypt was exceedingly favourable, as were likewise their means of acquiring information from the numerous caravans whose route lay through their country, thus forming a chain of communication between Europe and India"—*Henderson*. Yet what is the wisdom of man to trust in? "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." The wisdom of the wise is but foolishness; it is a miserable thing to trust in. Trust not in human wisdom: not in the wisdom of statesmen, scientists, ecclesiastics, theologians.

IV. Did they trust to the POWER OF THEIR MIGHTY MEN: this was worthless. "And thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every

one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter." Delizsch renders this, "And thy heroes despair, O Teman." Teman was the proper name of the southern portion of Idumea, called so after Tema, a grandson of Esau. Men trust in their heroes. At the banquets of public societies, companies, corporations, how does this confidence come out in the inflated cant of the speakers on the occasion, in relation to the army or the navy. A false confidence this also! God, by a breath of pestilence, can wither

all the armies of Europe in an instant.

CONCLUSION: There is nothing in which the sinner trusts, nothing in matter or mind, in force or skill, that can stand for one instant before the retributive stroke of justice. Though some trust in chariots and some in horses, let us trust in the name of the Lord. Men who trust in anything short of God, are like the man who in a thunderstorm takes shelter under a tree, whose tall branches attract the lightning which scorches him to ashes.

Biblical Criticism.

Subject: Daniel's Dream of the Four Beasts.

(Continued from Page 51.)

THE *Second Beast* (ver 5). **אַרְיֵה** signifies that this beast came first into sight after the lion, which also the predicates **אַחֲרֵי הַלֵּוֹן** prove. **אַחֲרֵי** expresses the difference from the first beast, **תְּבִינָה** the order in which it appears. The beast was like a bear. Next to the lion, it is the strongest among animals; and on account of its voracity it was called by Aristotle *ῥον παμφάγον*. The words **לְשִׁמְרָתָהּ חֲקִימָתָהּ** present some difficulty. They have been differently explained. The explanation of Rabbi Nathan, "and it established a dominion," with which Kranichfeld also agrees, is not only in opposition to the **וְהָיָה**, but is also irreconcilable with the line of thought. **וְהָיָה** is not the indefinite article, but the numeral; and the thought that the beast established *one* dominion, or a united dominion, is in the highest degree strange, for the character of a united or compact dominion belongs to the second world-kingdom, in no case in a

greater degree than to the Babylonian kingdom, and in general the establishing of a dominion cannot properly be predicated of a beast = a kingdom. The old translators (LXX., Theod., Peshito, Saad.) and the rabbis have interpreted the word רָאָה in the sense of *side*, a meaning which is supported by the Targ. רָאָה , and is greatly strengthened by the Arabic *s'thar*, without our needing to adopt the reading רָאָה found in several codd. The object to the verb רָאָה is easily supplied by the context, *it raised up*, i.e., *its body on one side*. This means neither that it leaned on one side (Ebrard), nor that it stood on its fore-feet (Hävernick), for the sides of a bear are not its fore and hinder part; but we are to conceive that the beast, resting on its feet, raised up the feet of the one side for the purpose of going forward, and so raised the shoulder or the whole body on that side. But with such a motion of the beast the geographical situation of the kingdom (Geier, Mich. Ros.) cannot naturally be represented, much less can the near approach of the destruction of the kingdom (Hitzig) be signified. Hofmann, Delitzsch, and Kliefoth have found the right interpretation by a reference to chap. ii. and viii. As in chap. ii., the arms on each side of the beast signify that the second kingdom will consist of two parts; and this is more distinctly indicated in chap. viii. by the two horns, one of which rose up after the other, and higher; so also in this verse the double-sidedness of this world-kingdom is represented by the beast lifting itself up on the one side. The Medo-Persian bear, as such, has, as Kliefoth well remarks, two sides: the one, the Median side, is at rest after the efforts made for the erection of the world-kingdom; but the other, the Persian side, raises itself up, and then becomes not only higher than the first, but also is prepared for new rapine.

The further expression, *it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth*, has also been variously interpreted. That שְׁלֹשָׁה means *ribs*, not *sides*, is as certain as that the ribs in the mouth between the teeth do not denote side-teeth, tusks, or fangs (Saad., Häv.). The שְׁלֹשָׁה in the mouth between the teeth, are the booty which the bear has seized, according to

the undoubted use of the word ; cf. Amos iii. 12 ; Ps. cxxiv. 6 ; Job xxix. 17 ; Jer. li. 44. Accordingly, by the ribs we cannot understand either the Persians, Medians, or Babylonians as the nations that constituted the strength of the kingdom (Ephr. Syr., Hieron., Ros.), or the three Median kings (Ewald), because neither the Medes nor the three Median kings can be regarded as a prey of the Median or Medo-Persian world. The "ribs" which the beast is grinding between its teeth cannot be the peoples who constitute the kingdom, or the kings ruling over it ; but only peoples or countries which it has conquered and annexed to itself. The determining of these peoples and countries depends on which kingdom is represented by the bear. Of the interpreters who understand by the bear the Median kingdom, Maurer and Delitzsch refer to the three chief satrapies (chap. vi. 8-22). Not these, however, but only the lands divided between them, could be regarded as the prey between the teeth of the beast, and then Media also must be excluded ; so that the reference of the words to the three satrapies is altogether inadmissible. Hitzig thinks that the reference is to those towns that were destroyed by the Medians, viz., Nineveh, Larissa, and a third which he cannot specify ; V. Leng regards the number three as a round number, by which the voracity of the beast is shown ; Kranichfeld understands by the three ribs constituent parts of a whole of an older national confederation already dissolved and broken asunder, of which, however, he has no proof. We see, then, that if the bear is taken as representing the Median kingdom, the three ribs in its mouth cannot be explained. If, on the other hand, the Medo-Persian world-kingdom is intended by the bear, then the three ribs in its mouth are the three kingdoms of Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt, which were conquered by the Medo-Persians. This is the view of Hofner, Ebr., Zünd, and Klief. The latter, however, thinks that the number "three" ought not to be regarded as symbolical, but as forming only the contrast to the number four in ver. 6, and intimating that the second beast will not devour in all the regions of the world,

but only on three sides, and will make a threefold and not a fourfold plunder, and therefore will not reach absolute universality. But since the symbolical value of each number is formed from its arithmetical signification, there is no reason here, any more than there is in the analogous passages (chap. viii. 4, 22), to depart wholly from the exact signification.

The last expression of the verse, "*Arise, devour much flesh*," most interpreters regard as a summons to go forth conquering. But this exposition is neither necessary, nor does it correspond to the relative position of the words. The eating much flesh does not form such a contrast to the three ribs in the mouth between the teeth, that it must be interpreted of other flesh than that already held by the teeth with the ribs. It may be very well understood, with Ebrard and Kleifoth, of the consuming of the flesh of the ribs; so that the command to eat much flesh is only an explication of the figure of the ribs held between the teeth, and contains only the thought that the beast must wholly consume the plunder it has seized with its teeth. The plural *וְיִכְלֹךְ* (*they spoke*) is impersonal, and therefore not to be attributed to the angel as speaking.

Ver. 6. *The Third Beast*, which Daniel saw after the second, was like a panther (leopard), which is neither so kingly as the lion nor so strong as the bear; but is like to both in rapacity, and superior to them in the springing agility with which it catches its prey; so that one may say, with Kleifoth, that in the subordination of the panther to the lion and the bear, the same gradation is repeated as that which is found (of the third kingdom) in chap. ii., of the copper (brass). Of the panther it is said, that *it had four wings of a fowl and four heads*. The representation of the beast with four wings increases the agility of its movements to the speed of the flight of a bird, and expresses the thought that the kingdom represented by that beast would extend itself in flight over the earth; not so royally as Nebuchadnezzar,—for the panther has not eagle's wings, but only the wings of a fowl,—but extending to all the regions of the earth, for it has four wings. At the same time the beast has four heads, not two only, as

one might have expected with four wings. The number four thus shows that the heads have an independent signification, and do not stand in relation to the four wings symbolizing the spreading out of the kingdom into the four quarters of the heavens (Bertholdt, Häv., Kran.). As little do the four wings correspond with the four heads in such a way that by both there is represented only the dividing of the kingdom into four other kingdoms (Häv. Comment., Auberl.). Wings are everywhere an emblem of rapid motion. Heads, on the contrary, where the beast signifies a kingdom, are the heads of the kingdom, *i.e.*, the kings or rulers; hence it follows that the four heads of the panther are the four successive Persian kings, whom alone Daniel knows (chap. xi. 2). Without regard to the false interpretations of chap. xi. 2 on which this opinion rests, it is to be noticed that the four heads do not rise up one after another; but that they all exist contemporaneously on the body of the beast, and therefore can only represent four contemporary kings, or signify that the kingdom is divided into four kingdoms. That the four wings are mentioned before the four heads, signifies that the kingdom spreads itself over the earth with the speed of a bird's flight, and then becomes a fourfold kingdom, or divides itself into four kingdoms, as is distinctly shown in chap. viii. 5, ff.

The last statement, "*and dominion was given to it,*" corresponds with that in chap. ii. 39, "*it shall bear rule over all the earth,*" *i.e.*, shall found an actual and strong world-empire.

Ver. 7 and 8. *The Fourth Beast.* Introduced by a more detailed description, the fourth beast is presented more distinctly before our notice than those which preceded it. Its terribleness and its strength, breaking in pieces and destroying all things, and the fact that no beast is named to which it can be likened, represent it as different from all the beasts that went before. This description corresponds with that of the fourth kingdom, denoted by the legs and the feet of the metallic image of the monarchies (chap. ii.). The iron breaking in pieces all things (chap. ii. 40), is here represented by the great iron teeth with which this monster devoured and

brake in pieces. In addition to that, there are also feet, or, as ver. 19 by way of supplement adds, "claws of brass." with which in the mere fury of its rage it destroyed all that remained, *i.e.*, all that it did not devour and devour with its teeth. *הָיָא מְשִׁנִּיה רַנְרַ* (*it was made different*) denotes not complete diversity of being, from which Hitz. and Del. conclude that the expression suits only the Macedonian world-kingdom, which, as occidental, was different in its nature from the three preceding monarchies, which shared among themselves an oriental home, and a different form of civilization and despotic government. For although *מְשִׁנִּיה* expresses more than *אַחֲדָה* (ver. 5), yet the *שְׁנֵי דָא בִּן דָּא* (diverse one from another) spoken (ver. 3) of all the beasts, shows that *מְשִׁנִּיה* cannot be regarded as expressing perfect diversity of being, but only diversity in appearance. The beast was of such terrible strength and destructive rage, that the whole animal world could furnish no representative by whose name it might be characterised. It had ten horns, by which its terrible strength is denoted, because a horn is in Scripture always the universal symbol of armed strength. With this the interpretation (ver. 24) that these horns are so many kings or kingdoms, fully corresponds. In the ten horns the ten toes of the image (chap. ii.) are again repeated. The number ten comes into consideration only according to its symbolical meaning of comprehensive and definite totality. That the horns are on the head of the one beast, signifies that the unfolding of its power in the ten kingdoms is not a weakening of its power, but only its full display.

Ver. 8. Here a new event is brought under our notice. While continuing to contemplate the horns (the idea of continuance lies in the particip. with the *verb. fin.*), Daniel sees another little horn rise up among them, which uproots, *i.e.*, destroys, three of the other horns that were already there. He observes that this horn had the eyes of a man, and a mouth which spake great things. The eye and the mouth suggest a human being as represented by the horn. Eyes, and seeing with eyes, are the symbols of insight, circumspec-

tion, prudence. This king will thus excel the others in point of wisdom and circumspection. But why the eyes of a man? Certainly this is not merely to indicate to the reader that the horn signified a man. This is already distinctly enough shown by the fact that eyes, a mouth, and speech were attributed to it. The eyes of a man were not attributed to it in opposition to a beast, but in opposition to a higher celestial being; for whom the ruler, denoted by the horn, might be mistaken, on account of the terribleness of his rule and government. "*Ne eum putemus juxta quorundam opinionem vel diabolum esse vel demonem, sed unum de hominibus in quo totus Satanas habitaturus sit corporaliter,*" as Jerome well remarks; cf. Hofmann and Kliefoth. A mouth which speaketh great things, is a vain-glorious mouth. רַב־רִבִּי are *presumptuous things*, not directly blasphemies (Häv.). In the Apocalypse xiii. 5, *μεγάλα* and *βλασφημίας* are distinguished.

C. F. KIEL, D.D.

Homiletical Breviaries.

No. CLXXXVI.

Subject: DIVINE MERCY IN HUMAN AFFLICTION.

"For the Lord will not cast off for ever: But though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies."—*LAMENTATIONS* iii. 31, 32.

This is the testimony of the experience of a man in great affliction. Jerusalem was now overthrown, the Temple burnt, the throne of David now in the dust, the yoke of oppression on the necks of the Jewish people, and the seal of Heaven on their calamities. Albeit the prophet says, "He doth not afflict willingly." Thus, like Milton in his blindness, he asserts Divine Providence, and justifies the ways of God to man. The subject is Divine mercy in human affliction. This is seen (I.) In the *RELUCTANCE WITH WHICH THE AFFLICTION PROCEEDS FROM GOD*. All afflic-

tions may be said to come from Him, inasmuch as they are the penalties of His laws and take effect by His permission. He foresees all human suffering, and could prevent it. Hence, though He does not directly inflict suffering, suffering in this sense may be traced to Him. He causeth grief, He afflicts; but this suffering is not according to His will, "He doth not afflict willingly." Suffering is repugnant to His benevolent nature, why then does He allow it to come? First: Because it is according to the benevolent laws of the universe. Love has linked indissolubly suffering and sin together. The greatest calamity that could happen to the universe would be a dissolution of this connection. Secondly: Because sufferings have a disciplinary influence. They tend to quicken spiritual thought, loosen interest in the material, and throw the soul back upon itself, the spiritual and the everlasting. True, it does not always discipline, but it always should and always does in those who are the children of God. "Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment," etc. This is seen (II.) in THE LOVING-KINDNESS WITH WHICH AFFLICTIONS ARE EVER ATTENDED. "Yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies." Divine mercy is always seen in sufferings. It is seen, First: In the slightness of the suffering compared both with the deserts and the enjoyments. How much misery does the sinner deserve? Let his own conscience answer. How little are his sufferings, compared with this! How much happiness does he enjoy every day! What are his pains, compared with the bulk of his enjoyments? It is seen, Secondly: In the alleviations and sustaining ministries afforded under suffering. How much to alleviate suffering has the greatest sufferer, how many relieving ministries at hand—loving friends, medical science, etc., etc.

No. CLXXXVII.

Subject: A GUILTY CONSCIENCE.

"The yoke of my transgressions is bound by His hand: they are wreathed, and come up upon my neck."—*LAMENTATIONS* i. 14.

Take these words to illustrate a guilty conscience, or a conscience under a profound sense of its guilt. I. Its sense of OPPRESSION. It feels itself under a "yoke." It is a heavy iron, a crushing "yoke," is sin. It is on the neck, there is no breaking

away from it. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?"

II. Its sense of **DEGRADATION**. It feels itself held in a miserable vassalage, carnally sold under sin. What a degradation is sin! A quickened conscience alone can realize it. III. Its sense of **RETRIBUTION**. It feels that the heavy, degrading yoke is bound by "His hand," the hand of justice: that his transgression is like a chain wreathed by retributive law upon the neck. The guilty conscience awakened feels that God is in all its sufferings, that there is justice in all.



No. CLXXXVIII.

Subject: REDEMPTIVE TRUTHS—"THINGS."

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip."—**HEB. ii. 1.**

Gospel truths are here called "things." They are not mere words, sounds, dreams, but entities, stupendous realities. They involve, amongst other things, God's love for sinners and Christ's mediatorial agencies. I. They are things **COMMUNICATED**. "We have heard." They do not come to us either by intuition or investigation, they are brought to us, they are revelations that God at first made to some men that they might reveal them to other men, and thus on for ever. "We have heard" them from parents, teachers, ministers. II. They are things to be **RETAINED**. We are exhorted to give "earnest heed" to them, "lest at any time we should let them slip." They should be held, not merely in memory, as facts, but in the heart, as forces. They should be held lovingly, supremely, unremittingly; they are our life. III. They are "things" the retainment of which **REQUIRES MOST DETERMINED EFFORT**. "We ought to give the more earnest heed." Why this earnest effort? (1) Because the loss of them would be the *greatest* calamity. To have had them and to have lost them, puts us in an infinitely worse condition than if we had never had them at all. "It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah," etc. (2) Because the loss of them is a *possible* calamity. Men have had them and lost them. There are many things in society that tend to relax the soul's hold upon them—remaining depravity within, seductive influences without.



No. CLXXXIX.

Subject: CHARACTER.

"Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe."—JOEL iii. 13.

These words suggest three remarks concerning man's moral character. I. It is a GROWTH. The harvest begins with the germinating seed. Moral character, both good and bad, is a growing thing; thoughts grow, affections grow, principles grow, habits grow. Character is not like a rock, which remains the same from year to year; but rather like the tree, ever growing. Men get worse or better every day. II. It has a MATURITY. Every character ripens, reaches its harvest. Hemlock as well as wheat ripens; character, both evil and good, comes to maturation. III. It has RETRIBUTION. "Put ye in the sickle," "Whosoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, he that soweth to the spirit shall reap everlasting life." The time for the sickle hastens to all.

Scientific Facts used as Symbols.

"Books of Illustration" designed to help preachers, are somewhat, we think, too abounding. They are often made up to a great extent of anecdotes from the sentimental side of life, and not always having a healthful influence or historic foundation. We find that preachers and hearers are getting tired of such. Albeit illustrations are needed by every speaker who would interest the people, and are sanctioned by the highest authority. Nature itself is a parable. Hence we have arranged with a naturalist who has been engaged in scientific investigation for many years, to supply the *Humilist* with such reliable and well-ascertained facts in nature, as cultured and conscientious men may use with confidence, as mirrors of morals and diagrams of doctrines.

**Subject: Nature's Method of answering Man's Questions,
—The Chemical Experiment.**

A FORCE cannot be seen or grasped; we notice it only in the effects which it produces. If we would know whether a piece of steel possesses magnetic power, we apply a needle, and try whether this is attracted by it or not; we then conclude from its behaviour as to the absence or presence of magnetism. Precisely the same course, that of *experiment*,

must be taken in order to become acquainted with the chemical forces, the affinities of bodies for each other. Every experiment is a question put to a body, the answer to which we receive through a phenomenon, that is, through a change which we observe, sometimes by the sight or the smell, sometimes by the other senses.

Subject ; The Transient,—The Ephemera.

WHAT an emblem of all transient things is the beautiful Ephemera ! To acquire its lovely form, that lovely winged insect has been obliged to undergo several wonderful transmutations ; but its glory, like man's pomp, is very short-lived, for the very hour of its perfection is the hour of its death, and it seems scarcely introduced to pleasure when it is obliged to part with life.

Subject: Total External Change does not necessarily imply Total Alteration,—The Snake and its Skin.

IT is of paramount importance,—in these days more than ever,—to discriminate between a mere change in the form of a thing and a radical alteration in its nature. Here is the test question for solution :—Is the change in question merely an external one, or is it a change in essence ? Be not deceived, you may have a total change in the outside which leaves the subject of it still the same. Look among the bushes there, and you behold clearly enough the skin of a snake. He has certainly changed. Yes ; but only in his skin. The snake is still alive, and as much a snake as ever. Even this modification of his external appearance, too, was (as it often is with other existences besides the snake) a mere matter of convenience. The external covering just thrown off was not so good as the one which was to supersede it, and which has been in preparation some time. So, as soon as the new skin was quite ready, the snake wriggled to the bushes most expedient for his purpose, and by their help literally crawled out of his old skin, and left it there on the bush. A wonderful

change, no doubt, in one sense, and yet it is one which is unattended by any alteration in the nature of the snake. We often observe in the operations of nature and in the tricks of politics changes which are not at all important, and superficial alterations which have no radical significance whatever. When the acorn develops into the oak, the transformation is wonderful. But when the snake sheds its skin, it is still a snake. The proceeding is just one of those many surface changes which the world sees, and whereof nothing important issues.

Subject: Great Power in Little Workers,—Invertebrate Animals.

THE strength of invertebrate animals is relatively speaking immense. Many persons have observed how out of proportion the jump of a flea is to its size. A flea is not more than an eighth of an inch, and it jumps a yard; in proportion, a lion ought to jump two-thirds of a mile. Pliny shows in his Natural History, that the weights carried by ants appear exceedingly great when they are compared with the size of the indefatigable labourers. The strength of these insects is still more striking when one considers the edifices they are able to construct. Man is proud of his works; but what are they after all in comparison with those of the ant, taking the relative heights into consideration? The termites, or white ant, constructs habitations many yards in height, which are so firmly and solidly built that the buffaloes are able to mount them, and use them as observatories. They are made of particles of wood joined together by a gummy substance, and are able to resist even the force of a hurricane. The largest pyramid in Egypt is only 146 yards high, that is, about ninety times the average height of man; whereas the nests of the termites are a thousand times the height of the insect which constructs them. Their habitations are thus twelve times higher than the largest specimens of architecture raised by human hands. We men are obviously much beneath these little insects, so far as strength and the spirit of working go. Let us contemplate their work and renew our labours.

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

ORIGINAL SIMILITUDES.

LOVE.—In the moral universe there is but one true life, and that is the life of love.

AFFLICTION.—The more fiercely the billows beat upon the shore, the more the pebbles are rounded and polished; the more the diamond is cut, the more brilliant it becomes. Afflictions are the billows that polish souls for the temple of eternity, they are the instruments that make them sparkle as diamonds in the heavens above.

THE HOLINESS OF CHRIST.—Christ has regenerated millions, and will regenerate millions more, because of the *holiness* of His character. Because He is "above" them, He rolls His moral thunders down to alarm the careless; pours His sunbeams to quicken the dead; rains His fertilizing showers to make moral deserts blossom as the rose. As the well-being of the earth depends upon the heavens, so the spiritual progress of humanity depends upon that Character that is stretched over us like the sunny skies.

TRUTH IN CONSCIOUSNESS.—Truth in the Bible is "a lamp" without; truth in consciousness is a star within. The lamplight has fallen on millions that have lived and died morally in the dark. But this "morning star" of consciousness is a certain harbinger of a glorious day. As sure as it shines, the sun is on its march and it shall rise. Its beams shall soon skirt the

horizon and play upon the summits of the holy hills. It shall not pause until it reach the meridian, and pour its rays over the whole hemisphere of soul, thawing every fountain of the heart into love, quickening every latent germ into life, and making the whole beautiful as Eden, and fruitful as the garden of the Lord.

SELF-RULE.—The man who has gained a sovereignty over himself, who has all his impulses and faculties at his command, has a wonderful relief in suffering. Such a man has a power to steel to some extent his nerves, close his senses, and argue away his pains. By the power of calm reflection he can make the darkest night of his sufferings burn with stars. Like the Æolian harp, he can turn the fiercest tempests into music.

CONFESSION.—A penitential confession of sin is the way to roll off the burden of guilt, and to remove the deepest sorrows of the soul.

SOUL GROWTH.—Widely grew the branches of those old cedars, offering to the traveller a cooling shade from the sun and a shelter from the tempest. How a divinely formed soul expands! It outgrows the boundaries of sects and the limit of creeds.

THE PROGRESS OF TRUTH.—Remedial truth was shut up in the breast of one lonely man, and He the son of a Jewish

peasant. But what has it become? The solitary seed covers many acres with precious grain; the little spring has swollen into a majestic river, bearing on its bosom the soul of the world to a higher civilization, a purer faith, and a diviner morality.

THE POWER OF SYMPATHY.—Genuine sympathy, too deep and strong for words,—that shakes the frame and unseals fountains of tears,—this is the balm to heal the broken heart.

WORSHIP.—There should be worship in all—in the farm, in the market, in the school, in all the scenes of recreation and enjoyment. Worship, not as a passing sentiment, not as an occasional service, but worship as an all-permeating and predominating spirit. Men should tread the soil with reverent step, feeling that all is holy ground.

THE VIRTUOUS DESIRE.—Vast and eternal is the distinction between a desire for *goodness* and a desire for *happiness*. The one is sacred, the other is selfish; the one is virtuous, the other is vile. The man who searches after heaven as an end, will never find holiness, nor indeed heaven either. Whereas the man who searches after holiness as an end, will find it and heaven too.

VIRTUOUS SINCERITY consists not only in being what we appear to be, but being what we ought to be.

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY is good in its influence. On this earth nothing is so useful to men as a Christly life. It is the preserving "salt," the refreshing stream, the life-giving light. One real Christly life is of more value to mankind than

all the speculations of philosophy, all the enactments of legislation, all the achievements of war.

SILENCE.—Conscious presence of Infinite Greatness would strike the soul with an awe that would restrain all utterance. Conscious presence of Infinite Perfection would surprise the whole being with that adoring rapture that will hush the voice and prelude all noisy speech. Such silence as this indeed is golden. Were the Eternal to be consciously felt by the race to-day, all the human sounds that fill the air and that din the ears of men would be hushed into profoundest quiet. The time hastens when all will be speechless, "when every mouth will be stopped."

GOOD WISHES are often like sentimental music—pleasant, but of no practical worth.

SIN AND SUFFERING.—From the eternal laws of moral reind, man cannot commit a wrong act without the infliction of an injury upon the soul, without blinding the judgment, deadening the sensibility, curtailing the liberty, drying up the affection, enfeebling the will.

THE SELFISH ALONE ANXIOUS ABOUT FUTURITIES.—Although the doctrine of Annihilists seems to us alike unscriptural and unphilosophic, and that of eternal misery inconsistent with our primitive beliefs respecting the character of the Creator, and repugnant to the deepest sentiment of our nature, we feel that we ought not dogmatically to pronounce on either of them. The Bible is obviously indistinct on the subject; and religion does not require that on it we should

have a clear assurance. The obligation to be religious is utterly independent of heaven or hell.

DEATH, ITS NEARNESS.—Our fathers, marvelling to see how suddenly men are and are not, compared life to a dream in the night, to a bubble in the water, to a ship on the sea, to an arrow that never rests till it falls; to a player who speaks his part upon the stage, and straight he gives place to another; to a man who comes to the market to buy one thing and sell

another, and then is gone home again. So the figure of this world passes away. This is our life! While we enjoy it, we lose it. As Jacob said that his years had been few, so we may say that our days shall be few.

FRIENDSHIP.—We are so constituted that in great afflictions we instinctively look for the sympathy of friends. We look for it as earnestly as the bewildered mariner looks for the guiding star, as the nocturnal sufferer for the light of day.

PREACHER.—It is a great source of encouragement to the preacher to feel that he has conscience on his side. He does not feel it necessary to stop at every stage that he may build up a laboured argument as to the truth of the positions which he has laid down or announced; he is not compelled to be for ever busy with the process of demonstration, as though what he uttered had no self-evidencing power, but must be fenced about with an array of credentials, or he could not otherwise look to gain assent to its truthfulness. He knows that the message which he delivers carries with it its own proof; so that while he might be casting about for methods by which to introduce it and secure for it an attentive and impartial hearing, it has gone straightway into the recesses of the mind, and there extorted a confession, however unwillingly rendered, and however speedily forgotten, of its being precisely such as the Almighty might be expected to send.—*Melville.*

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST ON EARTH. TWELVE LECTURES. BY SAMUEL HARRIS. London: Dickenson and Higham.

These lectures, we are informed, "were delivered to the students of Andover Theological Seminary in December, 1870. All except one of them have since appeared in the "Bibliotheca Sacra." They are now published in a volume in accordance with the desire expressed to the Author by persons in whose judgment he has confidence, and in the form in which they were originally delivered."

The work contains twelve lectures, the subjects of which are "The Idea of Christ's Kingdom on Earth in itself and in its History; The Antagonism of Christ's Kingdom to the World, or the Kingdom of Satan; The Peculiarity of Christian Virtue, involved in the fact that it is the Result of Redemption; The Divine Agency in the Establishment, Administration, and Triumph of Christ's Kingdom; The Church the Organic Outgrowth of the life-giving Grace of Christ; The Necessity and Characteristics of the Human Agency in advancing Christ's Kingdom; The Sacrificial Love of Christ the Type and Measure of Christian Love; The Christian Law of service; Characteristics of the Growth of Christ's Kingdom; The Progress of Christ's Kingdom in its Relation to Civilization; The Scriptural Doctrine of the Triumph of Christ's Kingdom distinguished from Millenarianism; The progress of Christ's Kingdom in its Relation to the Spirit of the present Age."

Few books lately have fallen into our hands equal to this in philosophic grasp, freshness of thought, beauty, and force of expression. It is in every way a masterly work. It abounds with passages brilliant in thought and majestic in rhetoric. We quote the following passages, which are selected at random, as examples of the contents of this able work.

"Christianity must meet the thinking and life of each age. Christianity must be known experimentally. We must take Christ's yoke, in order to learn of Him. We must be willing to do His will, in order to know the doctrine. Every one must both receive the truth as it is in

Jesus, and not as it has been in other men ; and receive it in his own experience and its adaptation to his own wants, and not in the experience of others and its adaptation to their wants. The food which one has eaten is necessarily excrementitious to another. The conditions and wants of different individuals and successive generations are varying and transient, though the truth remains unchanged. In order to preserve the doctrinal purity of Christianity in the thinking of any age, and its power in the life, it must meet the thinking and life of that age. Christianity must bring the same unchanging Christian truth ; but it must bring it, not as Athanasius thought it for his day, nor as Augustine thought it for his day, nor as Thomas à Kempis, Calvin, and Edwards thought it respectively for theirs ; but in the channels and methods of modern thought, and touching the topics on which modern thought is occupied. The Christian life produced is not the life of the ancient hermits and monks, nor of Calvin at Geneva, nor of the Puritans of the seventeenth century, nor of the Methodists of the eighteenth. It is the life of this age transfigured by the Christian faith and love. . . . In the type of mind of which the Jew is the representative, the intuitive or faith faculty predominates over the logical, and the mind is awed in the presence of the unseen, the incomprehensible, and the infinite ; the moral predominates over the speculative and scientific, and the man is awed before the Divine law, crushed with the sense of guilt and the expectation of punishment, terrified before the inexorable Judge to whom he must give account of every secret of his life. From these impressions, with which his soul trembles, he passes to believe the reality of the infinite and the unseen, as easily as from impressions on the eye and ear he passes to believe the reality of the outward world. The world unseen is real to him ; he expects it to manifest itself supernaturally ; he is prepared to hear voices from heaven, to see spirits and visions. Miracles occasion no difficulty of belief ; he regards them as the legitimate evidences of communications from the world unseen, and demands more. Nature itself he regards as a constant manifestation of the supernatural. It is God who thunders, who sends the wind and the rain. The Jewish literature in the Old Testament contains little argument or speculative philosophy. It is mainly historical and prophetic pictures of God's action in history, with the legislation for a theocracy, with moral law, an order of worship, and devotional poetry. In the Greek type of mind, on the contrary, the senses, the faculties of observation, and the logical powers predominate. Nature was so near to the Greek as to exclude the supernatural. His gods were the powers of nature personified. To the Jewish mind man is Divine, and nature is for his use. The Hebrew literature opens with the sublime proclamation that man is above nature, appointed to possess and use its resources and powers. The thinking of the Greek scarcely rises to this grand conception. To him nature is Divine, and man is its servant and worshipper. His thinking is a philosophy, elaborating by logical processes a system of the universe, starting sometimes with fire or water or some material

principle. In this type of mind the æsthetic element predominates over the moral, the sense of beauty displaces the sense of obligation, and joy in the present displaces the sense of what ought to be the consciousness of sin and the foreboding of judgment. To this type of mind nature is all-sufficient; miracles, instead of being helps to faith, are themselves its greatest difficulty. Accordingly, in the education of the race the Greek has contributed philosophical inquiry and scepticism, logic, art, and, if not physical science, the type of thought from which science comes."

SELECT THOUGHTS ON THE MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH, ETC., GATHERED FROM THE LITERATURE OF ALL TIMES. By Rev. Dr. DAVIES. London: W. Tegg & Co., Cheap-side.

We should like to see a new order of literary men established in this country, an order that might be denominated *Literary Gleaners*. The number of books now has become so enormous and are multiplying so rapidly every year, that it is impossible even for men of the greatest leisure to make themselves properly acquainted with even one per cent. of their contents. Although the great bulk contains more clay than ore, more chaff than grain, in each volume it is reasonable to suppose that there is something valuable, some seed worth cultivating, some idea that may quicken thought, solve the problems, and lift some spirit into a life and beauty. Hence the importance of *Literary Gleaners*. These men, however, should be duly qualified. They should have eyes to see the true thing, and hearts to love it. They should be not only good winnowers, giving nothing but the grain, but good judges of the grain, selecting only the best. Several men of late years have tried their hand at this work with more or less success. The author of the work before us, had we the power, we would ordain to that order, although perhaps he has not shown the highest qualifications. He has gone to too many inferior authors; he should have gleaned, at first anyhow, in the fields of the great masters. Nor does he always make the best selections from the fields he gleans. We can say this, not only from his treatment of the works of others, but from the numerous selections he has taken from our humble productions. He must be either not extensively acquainted with our writings, or not in sympathy with what we appreciate most. Notwithstanding all this, he has produced a most valuable volume, and we shall be glad to find that he pursues the literary path he has commenced. It is one in which he can be excessively useful and find abundant encouragement.



A HOMILY
ON
*All Things Working Together for
Good.*

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God."—Rom. viii. 28.

THIS text declares that God has so disposed His providential arrangements that all the phenomena and occurrences incidental to the lives of His faithful servants shall combine to work out their ultimate advantage; it would seem, moreover, by implication, to announce a special, a personal, and an individual interposition of the Divine guidance and assistance whenever such special interference becomes necessary. Not suspending, or reverting, or in any way deranging the laws of nature which are His ministers, but overruling and controlling all things for the final and eventual advantage of the righteous. From this doctrine, however, there are many dissentients.

The most plausible, if not the most formidable argument usually employed against any special and individual intervention of Providence, on behalf of those who obey and

trust in Him, is that which involves the evidence of external facts, which appeals to daily and palpable experience, which derides those who humbly but steadfastly take their stand beneath the ruling and the overruling Providence of a Heavenly Father, asking them tauntingly, What have you to show for all your prayers for the Divine guidance and protection? What result has come of all your petitions for that special and personal interposition which all prayer implies? What difference has it made? To what purpose have you cradled yourself in this vain illusion, in this fantastic expectation that the Divine purposes and the prescribed course of destiny can in the smallest degree be modified or affected one way or another by your supplications? You that are in the habit of appealing to Providence, are you any better off than those who in silence take things as they come? Or if the temperance of your lives, the integrity of your dealings, the good esteem of your fellow citizens, may have done much towards exempting yourselves and many other pious people from several vexations which the godless have brought down upon themselves, still, with regard to the ordinary exigences and the daily vicissitudes of life, what privilege of security do you enjoy? Have fraud, misfortune, sickness, or the risks of commerce kept aloof? Has misinterpretation, calumny, dishonour that you could not help? Has the fatal epidemic, plague, fever, pestilence, respected the sanctity of your threshold? Has death relented as he approached your hearth, and hurried on to desolate only that of unbelievers? Nay, when you have desired to escape from any calamity that seemed to be impending, have you not had recourse to precisely the same human measures for cure or for prevention, as are resorted to by the most inflexible denier of any specially intervening Providence? What then? Like him,—no more, no less,—you incur every ill that flesh

is heir to. Like him you have recourse to every antidote that experience prescribes, and yet you say that all things work together for good to them that love God ; in other words, that God so arranges and adjusts His providential dispensations that they shall in a special manner and degree promote the advantage of His faithful people, as distinguished from all others.

Before attempting to answer this, there is one particular which ought to be cleared up. The whole force of this objection rests upon the assumption that those who acknowledge and obey God undergo just as much temporal calamity as other people, and that, therefore, it is preposterous to say that all things work together for their good. But has it never occurred to the casuist whom we are supposing, to reflect that he may be making a confusion between the ultimate advantage of those of God's servants whom He sees fit to subject to discipline, and the present exemption from trial which some of them enjoy ? Is it not sometimes forgotten that there is a future economy in prospect, which cannot be put out of calculation in speculating on the privileges of God's faithful people ? Let our casuist ask himself candidly if he may not have fallen into this very common mistake—the mistake, namely, of not sufficiently distinguishing between temporal convenience and eternal security. The Scriptures nowhere make this confusion between the two, as if present comfort and eternal bliss were convertible terms, which might be substituted one for the other without altering the sense of either. The Scriptures nowhere promise that all things shall work together for the present ease and comfort, and for the exemption from every pain, and sorrow, and distress, and trial of God's faithful children. On the contrary, we read that “many are the troubles of the righteous ;” and we are taught that there are times and circumstances when medicine is more needful than food, and bitter

medicine more suitable than sweet. But what the scriptures do say is, that all things shall work together for the ulterior good of the faithful. Our own fond dreams and anticipations of prosperity are usually made up of robust health, of competent income, of gratified ambition, of professional promotion, of the affection and esteem of men and women that are round about us, and the acquisition of "honour, love, obedience, troops of friends." In place of these it may be that you have encountered some more some fewer of the "whips and scorns of time;" baffled endeavours, defeated expectations, mortified vanity, constitutions broken up by natural decay, domestic distress, financial ruin. Your whole future irretrievably clouded. "Was ever sorrow like my sorrow?" You may have exclaimed, "was ever destiny so pitiless?"

But wait. Wait till you have learned that it was not inexorable Fate, but the foresight of a paternal Providence that ordained this trial as the precise one which your case and peculiar moral constitution required. I do not believe that it is in the power of any individual or of any nation to deny that the greatest apparent calamities, disasters, and humiliations may have been, or may yet prove to be, in the long run, the most fortunate and the most advantageous occurrences that could possibly, in God's farsighted Providence, have been arranged for them. Wait till, having learned to bow before the discipline with filial meekness, that discipline has begun to take its intended and legitimate effect, detaching you from that pursuit of shadows in which so many are engaged; purging you from self and all sordid influences; teaching you to appraise at their respective and comparative values the transient comforts of earth and the infinite blessedness of heaven, till by degrees you become acclimatized for eternity; and then you will no longer hesitate to admit that sweet are the uses of adversity,

and it will no longer seem a paradox to say that all things work together for the good of those who love God.

Having put in then this precaution, namely, that we are not to make a confusion between *ultimate* good and the mere exemption from trouble of a quiet uneventful life, let us proceed for a few moments to the argument sometimes so triumphantly alleged, namely, that since precisely the same troubles fall upon him who believes and him who disbelieves,—or rather upon him who keeps up communion with God in prayer and him who neglects to do so,—it becomes absurd to say that these trials work in one direction for the man of prayer and in another for the man that never prays; and that circumstances, good or evil, work together for the advantage of the righteous in any sense which is not equally true of others.

I apprehend, however, that the regular and consistent life of a Christian man—the temperance, the integrity, the self-control, the good repute which will result from his convictions, will tend—will at least tend to obtain for him many temporal comforts which they will not always absolutely ensure; and will at least tend to alleviate for him many evils from which they cannot guarantee an absolute immunity. Godliness has in a considerable degree, though within certain limitations, the promise of the life that now is, and also of that which is to come. But still it can hardly be denied that for the most part the sunshine, the darkness, and the cloud appear to be dispensed in this world pretty much alike to the just and the unjust, according to their various sorts and conditions; and this is put forward as negating the assertion that God makes any distinction in His dealings with the just and the unjust. There is, however, a fallacy here which you cannot but instantly perceive. The same agency

brought into contact with different objects will produce totally different effects. A lighted taper inserted into a phial of one kind of gas, will burn with the utmost brilliancy and beauty; in another phial, charged with a different kind of gas, that same taper will become extinguished in fetid and offensive smoke, and in a third it would produce an instantaneous and violent explosion. So the same calamity—sickness, bereavement, commercial disaster—will awaken in one man a slumbering conscience, will drive another to distraction, and a third it will draw nearer to God than ever; so that, whilst it is literally and undeniably true that the same calamities (except such as are the direct consequences of our own voluntary acts) come alike upon the good and evil, it is a transparent fallacy to infer that the same ulterior results will follow in both cases. It is a fallacy, practically speaking, that the same visitation retains its nature and character under totally different circumstances and applied to different objects. It is a fallacy to maintain that a curse may not remain a curse, or be transformed into a blessing, according as it is piously accepted as a salutary discipline or rebelled against as a wanton and arbitrary infliction. It is on the temper of the recipient that the result depends, and whether or not all things, good or ill, concur to his advantage. Indeed, is it not so throughout moral and material nature and the experience of human life? Does it not depend upon the use you make of anything, whether it becomes to you a blessing or a curse? Let me invite your attention to an illustration.

Beneath the petals of a graceful and familiar flower is secreted a sedative poison, of such quality that it will frequently steep a man in such a slumber as only the last trumpet can awake him from. This you at once recognise as opium. You cannot cause water to boil for the most ordinary culinary purpose, but you disengage an

element most formidable, the most irresistible power of expansion. This is steam. No summer passes over you, but you see the lightning tear the sky across as if it were a scroll of paper. This is electricity. These three agents, electricity, steam, and poison, to the mind of an untutored savage, are nothing but instruments of death. He can extract from them nothing but terror and destruction. But subject them to the investigation and manipulation of a man of science, and see what takes place. In that deadly narcotic he detects the principle of morphine; he compounds it with suitable ingredients, and converts it into one of the most inestimable and indispensable preparations in the pharmacopœia. From death he extracts life. In steam he snatches, as it were, from the hand of nature one of her most gigantic powers, and compels it to become the most obedient and the most versatile of his servants. It descends with him to caverns that have been scooped out far beneath the bed of ocean. It scales with him the loftiest summits. To the Alpine mountain it says, "Be thou removed," and to the obstruction at Suez, "Be thou cast into the sea." It whirls round and round in his complicated machines, and makes for him fabrics the most intricate and varied that the most fantastic imagination can devise. Nay, the very lightning he enlists and disciplines into an obedient recruit; and along an almost imperceptible thread, traversing the profoundest abysses of the sea, he commands the electric fluid to carry his thought—a thought conceived only a moment ago—in another moment to the extremities of the earth, and in an instant compels a man ten thousand miles off to think of what he himself is thinking. And in such wise is all this true of all these forces and many more, that while to the uncultured savage they are agents of death and objects of terror, they are working together for the comfort and benefit of him who has learned how

to use them. They adorn his life, they enrich it, they prolong it, and in every way make it, at least in material respects, a little better worth having. Such is a faint, but not unfaithful, illustration of the way in which the same occurrence,—I am speaking now of occurrences of a painful character,—may act with diametrically opposite results upon the practical Christian and upon the man who lives without God in the world. In the godless exciting rebellion and hardness of heart, and in the Christian pointing to filial submission, confiding holiness, and life eternal; forasmuch as all things,—all things,—work together for the good of them that are true to God. perhaps the most satisfactory evidence of the reality of the working of this principle would be derived from an appeal to the actual experience of persons devoutly and religiously disposed, who are placed in circumstances of trial. We cannot cite them hither; but it is notorious to all who are conversant with such matters, that amongst such sufferers you may at any moment witness the reality of the paradox of the apostle, "As dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. vi. 9).

Of the grand maxim that he has bequeathed to us, St. Paul himself was the living illustration. From the outward, the temporal, the Epicurean point of view, what life could be less enviable than his? To the advocates of Fatalism disguised under the plausible and specious name of an "immutable" Providence—to the scoffers at the notion of a paternal, individual, and peculiar Providence—must not the words of the great Apostle sound like the ravings of an insane fanaticism? What is it that he says? "All things work together for his good"? His good! Why, when was so pitiable a target for the

arrows of outrageous fortune? All things concurrent to his advantage! What! his infirmities—his besetting temptations, the asperities of his rugged nature, his disappointments, his perils, his shipwrecks, his imprisonment, his persecutions, without truce or relaxation? The snares of his avowed enemies; the distrust of many of the Christians; the machination of false brethren; the implacable detestation of the Jews; the indifference of the Romans; the ridicule of the Greeks. His ministry interrupted, his back livid with the scourge, his limbs loaded in chains, his two years' captivity at Rome, from which he was released only in the way that the scaffold sets men free—if he ever cherished such a fond enthusiastic dream, as that Divine Providence ever interposes to adjust the welfare of His children, will not all these adversities now at length have undeceived him? Surely he has had enough suffering to teach him that the chariot of God rolls onward along its imperial way, without any stoppage for inquiry about the several circumstances of the poor travellers that it passes on the road. But, no; there is not even a momentary symptom of any such misgiving. The apostle had learned the secret of distilling the sweetest essences from the most repulsive ingredients. From every trial he extracts nutriment for sustaining a more steadfast faith, a more fervid hope, a more expansive charity. He cries with Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." And his unflinching faith in Christ directing all things, whether apparently good or apparently evil,—all things,—into the current of the ultimate blessedness of His people, reaches perhaps its climax in this celebrated apostrophe, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" etc. (Rom. viii. 35).

Your own trials and sorrows, of whatever kind, past, present, or to come, will suggest a much more effective

personal application of the subject than I have the ingenuity to contrive. There is not one but has suffered, is suffering, or will have to suffer, something or other, which will put to trial this confidence in Him who stands pledged to make all things work together for the good of His people. I will but invite you in conclusion to remember where it was that St. Paul acquired his immovable and steadfast faith. It was at the foot of the Cross—a phrase, perhaps, sometimes employed with little distinct meaning; but by the foot of the Cross, I mean a position and a point of view which at once invited and facilitated a survey of the Divine Saviour's career, of which the Cross,—the emblem of self-sacrifice,—was the most expressive and the most culminating symbol. It was in looking up to that Cross that Paul acquired and fortified his faith—that Cross which once had been the symbol of the lowest infamy, but which, through Christ's patient endurance and unreserved self-sacrifice, even unto death, has become a symbol of transcendent honour. That Cross, that once occupied the nadir of shame, is exalted now to the zenith of glory. At the foot of the Cross St. Paul had learned the great doctrine of self-abnegation: that he who is content to lose his life in the cause of truth shall save it, and that much tribulation is the gate to an infinite blessedness. At the foot of that Cross he was reminded that his Master had sustained every trial by which constancy can possibly be tested. Yes, every kind of trial, moral, spiritual, and material, culminating in what comprised them all, the Cross. Yet that all these sufferings had worked together to bring Jesus Christ through the grave and gate of death to the right hand of God, where He remains exalted, far above every name of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth. Into that august Presence we believe that His faithful apostle has since followed

Him, and thither may you also follow Him through the operation of that Spirit which makes all things work together for the eventual good of those who love God in His Son Jesus Christ.

W. H. BROOKFIELD, M.A.

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Psalms.

Our Purpose.—Many learned and devout men have gone philologically through this *Textbook*, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal *hermeneutics* of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough *homiletic* treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

Our Method.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1) The *History* of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2) *Annotations* of the passage. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase, or allusion that may occur.—(3) The *Assessment* of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is amongst the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4) The *Homiletics* of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavour so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately educed, as to suggest such thoughts, and indicate such sermonising methods, as may promote the proficiency of modern pulpit ministrations.

Subject: The Religion of Man.

"The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken," etc.—*PSALM* l. 1-15.

History.—This psalm is entitled "*A Psalm of Asaph.*" There are no less than twelve psalms attributed to him, and this is the first of them. Asaph was a famous musician, and one of the chief leaders of the Temple choir. His sons also seem to have been famed as Temple choristers. Genius, as well as stupidity, is often transmitted from sire to son. Some suppose, because certain events mentioned in the Psalms which are ascribed to him took place after his death, that all which bear his name are not his composition. The title, rendered in the margin, "for Asaph" means either that it was composed by him or by some one else for his use, as the leader of the Temple band. There is nothing in the poem to indicate the particular occasion of its

composition. It has no allusions either to names or circumstances of any particular time or place by which certainty can be reached as to its date.

ANNOTATIONS: Ver. 1.—“*The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken.*” The Septuagint and Vulgate make this “The God of gods, the Lord.” De Wette renders it “God, God Jehovah speaks.” Prof. Alexander, “The Almighty God Jehovah speaks,” and remarks that the word “mighty” is not an adjective agreeing with the next word, but a substantive in apposition with it. The idea is, that He who speaks is the true God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. It is *that* God who has a right to call the world to judgment, and who has power to execute His will. “*And called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.*” Not Israel alone, but all humanity in all places, is concerned in the revelation about to be made.

Ver. 2.—“*Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.*” “He comes forth in a splendid and imposing manner, from His royal residence, the seat of the theocracy, which is described as perfectly beautiful, not only in a moral and spiritual sense, but in reference also to its lofty situation, celebrated in Psalm xlviii. 2. The Hebrew verb is borrowed from the sublime theophany in Deut. xxxiii. 2. See also Ps. lxxx., xci. 1.”—Alexander.

Ver. 3.—“*Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him.*” The imagery is borrowed from the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai (Exod. xix. 16; xx. 18). Fire is a common emblem of God’s vindicatory justice (Deut. xxxii. 22; 2 Thess. i. 8).

Ver. 4.—“*He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people.*” He will summon heaven and earth as witnesses in the judgment of His people. The heavens and the earth are put for the Universe, and they are His witnesses in this great judicial transaction.

Ver. 5.—“*Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.*” “Who make a covenant with Me over sacrifice.”—Delitzsch.

Ver. 6.—“*And the heavens shall declare His righteousness: for God is judge Himself. Selah.*” “And the heavens proclaim His righteousness, for Elohim purposeth to sit in judgment. Selah.”—Delitzsch. As God Himself will be judge, His acts of judgment will be approved by the universe as just.

Ver. 7.—“*Hear, O My people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God.*” The Almighty Himself now speaks. He expostulates with Israel on account of its religious formalism, and demands thankfulness, obedience, and prayer.

Ver. 8.—“*I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before Me.*” Here God implies that Israel

brought the sacrifices regularly enough; but what He complains of is the lack of inward service.

Ver. 9.—“*I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds.*” Bullocks were offered regularly in the Hebrew services as sacrifices. Jehovah here declares that He had no need of such offerings. And in the following verses He declares His utter independency of all such offerings.

Ver. 10, 11, 12.—“*For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof.*” “For Mine is every beast of the forest, the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, and that which moveth on the meadows is with Me. If I were hungry I would not tell thee, for Mine is the world and its fulness.”—*Delitzsch*.

Ver. 13.—“*Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats!*” This is said to show the utter absurdity of supposing that He required any such sacrifices.

Ver. 14, 15.—“*Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High: and call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.*” Here is the religion the Almighty requires and the blessedness He attaches thereto.

ARGUMENT.—The object of this psalm is to set forth the transcendent importance of religion, and the abhorrence of the Almighty to mere ceremonial worship.

HOMILETICS. — The grand subject of these words,—and indeed of the whole psalm,—is the *religion of man*. Man is essentially a religious being. The religious element underlies his spiritual constitution, and influences the whole of his history. There is no soul, perhaps, without some god; and the god is the moral monarch of his being. The verse suggests two thoughts concerning the religion of man:—

I. A SOLEMN JUDGMENT AWAITS the religion of man. The religions of mankind are immensely various; some are genuine and some are spurious; but in all cases they await a testing day. Observe several things here concerning this coming judgment of man’s religious character,—

First: Its *Author*. Who is to judge it? “The mighty God, even the Lord.” “The names of God are here heaped up in order to gain a thoroughly full-toned exordium for the description of Him as the Judge of the world.” This judge is *Omniscient*, and cannot be deceived. He is *absolutely*

righteous, and cannot swerve from justice. He reads the heart; He knows what is in man. "Just and right is He." Before Him all must one day stand. Observe,—

Secondly: Its *Witnesses*. "He hath called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof." The whole universe will witness the judicial process. All holy moral intelligences are interested in the cause of justice, truth, and benevolence, and they will agree with the divine sentence. Observe—

Thirdly: Its *Grandeur*. "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people." The Eternal seems now at a distance; but He shall come into *conscious contact* with every human soul. He seems now silent; souls deafened by sin hear not His voice, but He will speak in thunder to them in the coming day. He seems now a nonentity, or at most a mere name, but He will appear everything on that day. "It shall be very tempestuous round about Him," etc. He will call to the heavens from above, He will move the universe, the whole creation will appear as a mere toy in His hand. Observe,—

Fourthly: Its *Officers*. "Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." Who are the officers? He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. He maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire. "Gather My saints;" what a gathering! From whence? To whom? What for? Observe,—

Fifthly: Its *Rectitude*. "The heavens shall declare His righteousness." All this confessedly metaphorical representation of a judicial period is intended undoubtedly to convey the solemn general truth that every man's religion will one day be tried as by fire. We may deceive ourselves, as well as others now; but the undeceiving period draweth near, and a period of inexpressible solemnity it will be to us all.

The verses suggest,—

II. THE WORTHLESSNESS OF MERE CEREMONY in the religion of man. Amongst all the minor differences which exist in the religions of mankind, there is one distinction that is fundamental, and that is referred to here, which is the distinction between the merely ceremonial and the genuinely spiritual, the religion of form and the religion of the heart. "Hear, O my people, and I will speak: O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God. I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before Me. I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds," etc. In relation to this mere ceremonial religion, God is here represented as condemning it. "I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof." (1) You can give Him nothing in your offerings. All belongs to Him, all is His property. "Of Thine own have we given Thee." Why attach worth, therefore, to any of your outward offerings; it is not yours, all is God's. He is not to be worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed anything. (2) He requires nothing. "Will I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?" Unlike all other beings in the universe, God's life is not sustained by appropriation. He is absolutely independent. This was a supposition which, when it was stated in a formal manner, must have been seen at once to be absurd; and hence the emphatic question in this verse. "It may serve to illustrate this also, that, among the heathen, the opinion did undoubtedly prevail, that the gods ate and drank what was offered to them in sacrifice: whereas the truth was that these things were consumed by the priests who attended on heathen altars and conducted the devotion of heathen temples, and who found that it contributed much to their own support, and did much to secure the liberality of the people, to

keep up the impression that what was thus offered was consumed by the gods. God appeals here to His own people in this earnest manner because it was to be presumed that they had higher conceptions of Him than the heathen had; and that, enlightened as they were, they could not for a moment suppose these offerings necessary for Him."—*Barnes*.

The verses suggest,—

III. THE VALUE OF RIGHT-HEARTEDNESS in the religion of man. "Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High, and call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." Observe three things. Observe,—

First: The *nature* of spiritual religion. (1) *Hearty gratitude*. "Offer unto God thanksgiving." Why does the Almighty wish us to thank Him? Not because our thanksgiving is of any service to Him; the hallelujahs of the universe cannot heighten His glory or augment His blessedness; but (a) Because it is *right*. It is right that His moral creatures should appreciate the favours He bestows upon them. (s) Because it is *necessary*—necessary to their own *virtue*. Gratitude lies at the root of all virtues. Necessary to their *happiness*. Genuine thankfulness of heart to God is the paradise of spirits. Heaven is praise. (2) *Hearty vows*. "Pay thy vows unto the Most High." Resolve to love, worship, and obey the great God; and in genuine earnestness carry out the vows in daily life. "Pay thy vows." Souls rise by holy resolutions; resolutions are the rungs in the ladder of soul progress. (3) *Hearty prayer*. "Call upon Me in the day of trouble." Call with thine own voice, in thine own language, from thy own heart. "In everything, by prayer and supplication, make known thy wants unto God." Observe,—

Secondly: The *advantages* of spiritual religion. (1) Divine deliverance. "I will deliver thee." He will assuredly deliver the true who call upon Him out of all their distresses. (2) Divine approbation. "Thou shalt glorify Me." That is, thou shalt honour Me. What a reward it will be, to have

the assurance that we have blessed and honoured our Maker.

CONCLUSION.—What is our religion? A mere thing of form, custom, or ceremony, that which is not merely the expression but the substitute of the true spirit of religion? If so, it behoves us at once to consider that all this is worse than worthless, and abhorrent to that Omniscient God into whose presence we shall soon be summoned. Ah me! How much of the religion of Protestant England is mere form!

" Ceremony leads her bigots forth
Prepared to fight for shadows of no worth,
While truths on which eternal things depend,
Find not, or hardly find, a friend :
As soldiers watch the signal of command,
They learn to bow, to sit, to kneel, to stand ;
Happy to fill religion's vacant place
With hollow form, and gesture, and grimace."—*Cowper*.

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Job.

The Book of Job is one of the grandest sections of Divine Scripture. It has never yet, to our knowledge, been treated in a purely Homiletic method for Homiletic ends. Besides many learned expositions on the book found in our general commentaries, we have special exegetical volumes of good scholarly and critical worth; such as Drs. Barnes, Wemyss, Mason Goode, Noyes Lee, Delitzsch, and Herman Hedwick Bernard: the last is in every way a masterly production. For us, therefore, to go into philology and verbal criticism, when such admirable works are available to all students, would be superfluous, if not presumption. Ambiguous terms, when they occur, we shall of course explain, and occasionally suggest an improved rendering; but our work will be chiefly, if not entirely, Homiletic. We shall essay to bring out from the grand old words those Divine verities which are true and vital to man as man in all lands and ages. These truths we shall frame in an order as philosophic and suggestive as our best powers will enable us to do; and this in order to help the earnest preachers of God's Holy Word.

Subject: Exalted Ideas of God and Humbling Ideas of Man.

"Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said," etc.—JOB xxv. 1-6.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS: Ver. 1, 2.—"Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said, Dominion and fear are with Him." This means that the Almighty is the Universal Ruler, and as such should be regarded with

reverence and fear. "*He maketh peace in His high places.*" Up the infinite heights of the universe, amidst revolving worlds and systems He maintains peace. Though immense their magnitude, countless their multitudes, and incalculably swift their velocities, there is no clash or jar, all is harmony.

Ver. 3.—"*Is there any number to His armies?*" His angels are called the army of heaven (Dan. iv. 35). The stars also are His hosts, which He bringeth out by number and calleth them all by their names. "*And upon whom doth not His light arise?*" If he refers to stars, there is no constellation or member of a constellation, however remote, on which His rays do not fall; or if to celestial intelligences, there is not one that lives not in His light.

Ver. 4.—"*How then can man be justified with God?*" How then can frail man be right with God? How can he think he has a right to find fault with the decrees of the Almighty, or challenge Him to enter into judgment with him, as Job had done? "*Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?*" Job himself had expressed the sentiment of these words (chap. iv. 17). Did Bildad mean to throw the question back for his own reflection, as if he believed Job maintained himself to be pure and holy?

Ver. 5.—"*Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in His sight.*" Perhaps Bildad spoke these words to Job at night, when the moon shone in her brightness and the stars in their splendour. The idea he wishes to convey to Job is, that the purest objects in the universe are impure as compared with God.

Ver. 6.—"*How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?*" "A worm;" a miserable reptile, bred in and supported by putrescent substances. What is man to God? A mere insect, nothing more.

HOMILETICS.—In this chapter Bildad gives us,—

I. Most EXALTED IDEAS OF GOD. He speaks of Him—

First: As the head of all authority. "*Dominion and fear are with Him.*" There are great authorities, mighty rulers of the universe; but from Him they all derive their power, and compared to Him they are nothing and vanity. He is the Most High: King of kings and Lord of lords. He speaks of Him,—

Secondly: As the Maintainer of all peace. "*He maketh peace in His high places.*" Who maintains the order of the stellar universe? Who maintains order amongst celestial intelligences? He is the God of peace. He is peaceful in His own nature, and peaceful in all His operations. He speaks of Him,—

Thirdly: As the *Commander* of all forces. "Is there any number of His armies?" What forces there are in the universe, material, mental, moral! They are all His hosts, He marshals and commands them all. He speaks of Him,—

Fourthly: As the *Fountain* of all light. "Upon whom doth not His light arise?" All light, in both the physical and spiritual realms of being, streams from Him as from the central fount. He is the Father of lights. He speaks of Him,—

Fifthly: As the *perfection* of all holiness. "How then can man be justified with God?" "Who is like the Lord our God, glorious in holiness?" etc.

In this chapter Bildad gives—

II. Most HUMBLING ideas of MAN. He represents him,—

First: As *morally degenerate*. "How can he be clean that is born of a woman?" He seems to have had the idea of the Psalmist, who thought himself born in sin and shaped in iniquity. We need no Bible to tell us that we are morally degenerate, that man in honour abideth not. Morally he is in an abnormal state, like a sheep that has wandered from the fold. He represents him,—

Secondly: As *essentially insignificant*. He is a "worm." How frail in body! He is crushed before the moth. Ay, and how frail in mind, too! How narrow his range of mental vision! How frail his intellectual powers! How weak in moral faculties—weak to resist the wrong and to pursue the right. Morally he is "without strength."

CONCLUSION.—From this chapter two things are suggested,—

First: *The glorious light of nature*. There is no reason to believe that Bildad had any special revelation from God. He was left to the light of nature and reason, albeit how grand are his conceptions of God, how true his ideas of man. "There is something truly sublime in this representation of the Supreme Ruler. His splendour darkens all; His radiant hosts are numberless; His light and purity surpass all created excellence; the heavenly bodies are eclipsed and retire before Him. Still greater is the disparity of man, whose impurity and meanness will not bear His inspection."

Secondly: *The unsatisfactoriness of religious controversy.* Bildad here finishes a long, earnest, and able controversy which he and the other two friends of Job had with him. They have exhausted their argumentative force, they appear no more on the scene. But what, has been the effect of the whole on Job? Not correction of mistakes, but great irritation and annoyance. And what was the effect of Job's arguments on them? Equally unsatisfactory. One might have thought that as these honourable men had nothing more to say, in thus closing they would have acknowledged their error, and yielded the palm of victory to the patriarch. But this they did not. They retired from the scene unimproved either, perhaps, in intelligence or in temper; and only mortified, it may be, at their non-success.

"Ye powers who rule the tongue, if such there are,
And make colloquial happiness your care,
Preserve me from the thing I dread and hate—
A duel in the form of a debate."
The clash of arguments and jar of words,
Worse than the mortal brunt of rival swords,
Decide no question with their tedious length,
(For opposition gives opinion strength)
Divert the champions prodigal of breath,
And put the peaceably disposed to death.
Oh, thwart me not, Sir Soph, at every turn,
Nor carp at every flaw you may discern;
Though syllogisms hang not on my tongue,
I am not surely always in the wrong!
'Tis hard if all is false that I advance,
A fool must now and then be right, by chance.
Not that all freedom of dissent I blame.
No; there I grant the privilege I claim.
A disputable point is no man's ground;
Bove where you please, 'tis common all around.
Discourse may want an animated "No!"
To brush the surface and to make it flow;
But still remember, if you mean to please,
To press your point with modesty and ease.
The mark at which my juster aim I take,
Is contradiction for its own dear sake.
Let your opinion, at whatever pitch,
Knots and impediments make something hitch;
Adopt his own, 'tis equally in vain,

Your thread of argument is snapped again ;
The wrangler, rather than accord with you,
Will judge himself deceived, and prove it too.
Vociferated logic kills me quite ;
A noisy man is always in the right.
I twirl my thumbs, fall back into my chair,
Fix on the wainscot a distressful stare ;
And, when I hope his blunders are all out,
Reply discreetly, 'To be sure !' 'No doubt !'—*Cowper.*

Sermonic Glances at the Gospel of St. John.

As our purpose in the treatment of this Gospel is purely the development, in the briefest and most suggestive form, of Sermonic outlines, we must refer our readers to the following works for all critical inquiries into the author and authorship of the book, and also for any minute criticisms on difficult clauses. The works we shall especially consult are—"Introduction to New Testament," by Bleek ; "Commentary on John," by Tholuck ; "Commentary on John," by Hengstenberg ; "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels," by Westcott ; "The Gospel History," by Ebrard ; "Our Lord's Divinity," by Liddon ; "St. John's Gospel," by Coestersee ; "Doctrine of the Person of Christ," by Dörner ; Lange ; etc., etc.

Subject: The Light of the World.

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world : he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."—JOHN viii. 12.

EXPOSITION : Ver. 12.—"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world : he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." This verse should perhaps chronologically follow the 52nd verse of the preceding chapter, for it is a continuation of that discourse. Some suppose that Christ, here speaking of Himself as the "light," alludes to the large, golden chandeliers in the court of the women of the Temple, the light of which illuminated the whole city. "He was," says Dr. Farrar, "seated at that moment in the Treasury—either some special building in the Temple so called, or that part of the court of the women which contained the thirteen chests with trumpet-shaped openings, called *shopherôth*, into which the people and especially the Pharisees used to cast their gifts. In this court, and therefore close beside Him, were two gigantic candelab

fifty cubits high and sumptuously gilded, on the summit of which nightly during the feast of tabernacles, lamps were lit which shed their soft light over all the city. Round these lamps the people, in their joyful enthusiasm, and even the stateliest priests and Pharisees, joined in festal dances; while, to the sound of flutes and other music, the Levites, drawn up in array on the fifteen steps which led up to the court, chanted the beautiful psalms which early received the title of 'Songs of Degrees.' In allusion to these great lamps, on which some circumstance of the moment may have concentrated the attention of the hearers, Christ exclaimed to them, 'I am the light of the world.' It was His constant plan to shape the illustrations of His discourses by those external incidents which would rouse the deepest attention and fix the words most indelibly on the memories of His hearers." Stier, however, thinks that the allusion is not to the light of the candelabrum, but to that of the great sun itself. It might be so, for in the second verse of the chapter we are told that it was "early in the morning" that Christ came to the Temple. The festal lights of the Temple were probably extinguished, and the glorious sun was ascending the horizon and throwing his radiance upon the marble Temple, and He might have meant, What that sun which is now breaking upon us is to the earth, that, and more than that, am I to the whole sinful world.

"The glorious morn from height to height
Shoots the keen arrows of the light;
And glorious in their central shower,
Palace of holiness and power,
The temple on Moriah's brow
Looks a new-risen sun below."

Elsewhere this same Evangelist calls Him the true "light." The Logos is the true light. "All," to use the language of another, "that has really enlarged the stock of intellectual truth or of moral goodness among men, all that has ever lighted any soul of man, has radiated from Him. He proclaims Himself to be the light of the world, and the truth: and His apostle speaking of the illumination shed by Him upon the Church, reminds Christians that the darkness is passing and the true Light now shineth."

HOMILETICS.—Observe that Christ is the Light for the World, that is, the Light for humanity. *Kóσμος* stretches over all time as well as over all space. The lights of the candelabra only irradiated the Temple, or at most part of the city; however effulgent, they left the surrounding regions in darkness. But Christ as a Light is not confined to a district but for the globe, not for a tribe but for the race, not for a time but for all times, the Light of the World. His doctrines are fitted for

universal reason, His precepts for universal conscience, His provisions for universal needs. Christ is no more the property of any particular community or tribe than the natural sun is, He belongs to the race.

I. Christ, as a "Light" is WONDROUSLY REVEALING. Light is a revealing element. When the sun goes down and darkness reigns, the whole of the beautiful world is concealed, all on ocean and on land are hidden with a veil which no eye can pierce. The sun arises, and all stands forth distinctly to view. What does Christ reveal? God, a spiritual universe, a moral government, a future state of retribution, a remedial system by which fallen humanity can be restored to the knowledge, the image, the friendship, and the enjoyment of the eternal Father. Men have appeared here in different ages and regions who have been called lights. Prophets were lights; John the Baptist was called a light; the apostles were lights; some of the heathen sages were lights; and many of the modern philosophers and scientists may be called lights. But Christ is *the* Light. Other lights are borrowed; He is the original fountain. Other lights only reveal dimly a few things in some narrow space; He reveals all things fully through all regions of moral being. Other lights shone a little, and, like meteors, went out; He burns on for ever—the "Light of the world."

II. Christ, as a "Light," is HUMANITY GUIDING. "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness." The sun may shine in its noontide radiance, and yet men may walk in darkness; they may shut their eyes or keep in cells or caverns. It is so with Christ. Though He is the moral Sun of the world, the millions "walk in darkness." Christ is to be followed (1) *doctrinally*, (2) *ethically*, (3) *spiritually*. Men who follow Him thus, will always be in the "light."

III. Christ, as a "Light," is SPIRITUALLY QUICKENING. The natural sun is the fountain of life to the world; his beams quicken all. Christ is the Life of the world. "In Him was life." He quickens the *intellect*, the *conscience*, the *soul*. There is no spiritual life apart from Him.

CONCLUSION:—How great the obligation of the world to

Christ! What would this earth be without the sun? Its condition would be wretched beyond conception; and yet it would be better off than humanity without Christ. Were all that Christ has been to humanity, and still is, to be withdrawn, into what a Stygian condition it would sink. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!"

Germes of Thought.

Subject: God's Fire Men.

"Pulling them out of the fire."—JUDS 23.

NOTICE some of the suggestive points of resemblance between sin and the object used here to represent it—fire.

I. Sin is like fire because it is MYSTERIOUS. What is fire? Of what are its consuming properties composed? What weight, colour, size, or shape is it? No man can answer these questions. They are surrounded by mystery; and yet, so palpable is the evidence that there is such a thing as fire, that no sane man can deny it.

So sin is a mystery. What is it? How came it into existence in a universe made and governed by a Being of almighty intelligence, power, and love? *No man can answer these questions.* There are difficulties here which perhaps the mind of an archangel cannot solve. But however much mystery there may be about the origin and existence of sin, no sane man can deny that the terrible thing exists. We have seen its destructive work all around us, and, more convincing than all, we have felt its blighting and destructive flame in our own hearts.

II. Sin is like fire, because it exists in a TWOFOLD STATE,—it is active and latent. Fire in its active state illuminates our streets by night, flames in the conflagration, and sends its boiling energy through the locomotive. In its latent state fire

exists in every material object about us, even in the ice on our rivers.

So sin exists in an *active* and *latent* state. In its active state it flames out in acts of profanity and crime. It bursts out in schemes of political corruption and in acts of commercial dishonesty. Sin in its latent state is strikingly symbolized by latent fire. It slumbers in the heart of universal humanity; it *exists in every man* that cometh into the world. It only requires a few strokes of the steel of a rightly adjusted temptation, to cause the sparks to fly out upon the tinder of the sensibilities, and the whole man is ablaze. Latent sin in the heart of a child is something like latent fire in nature. At first it does not consume or destroy. Through the friction of temptation, however, it soon begins its destructive work, though not suspected perhaps by others. Like fire in a wood, it soon begins to char and destroy the roots and fibres of the moral nature, leaving the trees and saplings of truth and heavenly aspiration and virtue to run to ashes. This is the cause of those unlooked-for falls in society. A man's, a woman's character is ruined in an hour. The community stands astonished, and people say, "How sudden!" Not so sudden, if you knew the process. No man honestly trying to live a Christian life ever falls prostrate in an hour. Sin must burn awhile first in the shape of unholy thought and desire. There are men and women all around us who are ready to break into destructive flame at the first spark of temptation.

III. Sin is like fire because of its POWER TO ATTRACT. How a child likes to toy with fire! How unconscious of danger! What multitudes will be attracted by a conflagration! So every effort is made by the devil and his agents to make sin attractive and fascinating, more attractive than any scene of fireworks. Look at the drinking and gambling houses, and places of even darker repute, in our towns and cities. What efforts to attract and allure! Flowers festooning the very steps that lead to death and hell. Wit to amuse, beauty to attract, music to please, drink for the thirsty, and revelry for the reckless. Thousands of our young men are attracted to

those places; and, ere they are aware of it, their wings and plumage are scorched and ruined, and they find themselves helplessly and, alas! hopelessly, floundering in the polluting mire of their own appetites and passions.

IV. Sin is like fire because it is **REGARDLESS OF THE WORTH OF WHAT IT CONSUMES**. The most splendid mansions, the finest works of art, the grandest furniture, all consumed as worthless rubbish. So with sin. The man of noblest parts is the most tempting mark for the devil. The fine genius, the sympathetic heart, the eloquent tongue, are consumed as readily as the most worthless creatures. No conflagration so costly or disastrous as the burning down of a man. Acres of burning warehouses, a whole city in a blaze, not to be compared. I have seen it, and so have you. I have seen self-control give way, and self-respect give way, and public confidence give way, and love of home and friends give way, and even hope, the longest and strongest beam in the structure, give way, and the whole man collapse, a heap of worthless rubbish, surrounded by despair too wide to look beyond.

V. Sin is like fire because it must be **RESISTED AND PUT OUT, OR IT WILL DESTROY ALL WITHIN ITS REACH**. We have our fire companies to rally to the scene of danger. Waggon and appliances always in readiness, always listening for the alarm—great energy and effort put forth when duty calls. So God has His firemen. The different branches of the Church are His fire companies. Alas! how foolish and dishonouring has been their conduct in the past! Instead of "pulling them out of the fire," some of these companies have entered into long debates as to how the fire could have started. One company comes forward, and with lordly bearing says, "Out of the way here, you presumptuous intruders. We are the only company properly credentialled and chartered for this work. You are only mock companies, and have no right to meddle with the work that God has given to *us exclusively* to accomplish." Long arguments are wielded pro and con, while in the meantime the fire of sin has been consuming millions of souls. Oh, how it humiliates us, to read the record of the past

doings of the firemen of God! May we learn a lesson from it for our future guidance! Oblivious to all minor points and side issues, may we devote every power to the one all-important work of saving souls,—“pulling them out of the fire.”

THOS. KELLY.

Movers, N. Y.

Subject: Pastors and Teachers.

“Some pastors and teachers.”—EPHESIANS iv. 11.

WHEN Christ ascended on high it was a glorious triumph. Numerous and mighty were the foes He had conquered. Principalities and powers—Sin, Satan, Death, Hell, were all led captive.

Having died for His Church, He reigns to promote her interests. *For this purpose* He gave gifts unto men. *Not* to angels; not to fallen angels, to convert them; not to holy angels, to make them ministers in His Church.

For the benefit of His Church He has bestowed gifts upon all the disciples. These are very diversified, *but* all of one spirit, all given to profit withal; that *Christians* may edify one another, by speaking often one to another; that they may be helpers of each other's faith and unitedly strive together for the preservation and propagation of the Faith.

But amongst the benefits bestowed upon the Church the appointment of their ministers is chief. In the first age of the Church He gave extraordinary officers. He gave to some apostles. What were their qualifications? They must have seen Christ. Have been called by Him. Immediately inspired. The power of working miracles. They could have no successors. Those who boast of being their successors should produce their credentials.

He gave to some, prophets—men whose office it was to unfold the meaning of the Old Testament, and to foretell future events, which of course required direct inspiration.

To some evangelists, who were companions of the apostles in travail. This is generally considered as one of the extraordinary offices which terminated when miracles ceased;

The only class of officers then appointed by Jesus Christ for the permanent instruction and oversight of His Churches are pastors and teachers, terms which designate only one office. These officers are elsewhere called elders, bishops, ministers. That the term Bishop in Scripture does not designate an officer of superior rank to a pastor, see Acts xx. 17-28, Phil. i. 1.

It is the exclusive right of Jesus Christ to appoint His ministers. It is He counts them faithful, putting them into the ministry. The ministry we have received of the Lord. No man can take this office on himself without committing the sin of Utna. He supplies the gifts which qualify them for this work. Makes them able ministers, able to win souls, etc. He regulates their movements, He holds the stars in His right hand and directs them where to shine (Acts xiii. 1, xvi. 6).

From Jesus, then, as Head of the Church, Churches should seek their ministers. As His gifts they should receive them, regarding them as His servants. "Esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." "Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves."

But how are Churches to know when pastors are the gift of Christ? He Himself supplies the test, "By their fruits ye shall know them." If they come from Him, they come in His spirit; they love the Master whom they serve; they bear His image. They bring His Gospel, they preach Christ crucified. Their doctrines you are to test; and if they bring to you any other doctrine than that which is in the word of God, receive them not.

How important, brethren, to the Church is a faithful ministry. How important to the world to have a faithful ministry.

Bolover.

J. H. C.

Subject: Lot's Wife a Beacon.

"Remember Lot's wife."—LUKE xvii. 32.

Lot's wife is one of the beacons of the Bible. Beacons are not to be looked at in idle and careless curiosity, but with an earnest gaze and for practical purposes. They point to the deeps of

perdition where men have been drowned ; to the giddy heights off which they have slipped, over which they have toppled into the terrible destruction below. They tell of the calamities which, with the suddenness of an eagle's swoop, have come upon them as the result of their heedlessness, and wickedness, and folly. They do not speak in articulate speech, but their *silent warning* is more terrible than the mightiest sound could be. We have an illustration of this in the disciples being pointed to Lot's wife as a beacon. Our Lord tells us of the calamities with which Jerusalem will be visited ; and instead of His shouting in their ears, saying, "Beware ! lest you do not escape, but perish in that general overthrow," He simply says, "*Remember Lot's wife.*" I need not waste words in proving that she is a beacon for us also. Let me ask you to "*remember,*"—

I. HER PRIVILEGES.

1. *Her marriage relationship.* Her husband feared the Lord. With all his moral weaknesses and faults, he was, on the whole, a godly man.

2. *She was warned of the destruction.* The angels warn Lot, his wife, and daughters. Threading his way through the blind multitude outside, Lot goes to warn his sons-in-law. They heeded not, but mocked, for they thought he was mocking them. He returns. The night passes. The morning dawns : and the angels "*hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife,*" etc. But not only did the angels warn her to flee from the doomed city, but took hold of her and led her out of it. Here was Divine earnestness and compassion combined. Surely no member of that favoured family will hesitate or tarry a moment ; but all with eager, onward look, "*escape for their life !*" It was not so. "*Remember Lot's wife.*" Remember,—

II. HER PERVERSENESS.

Her perverseness is seen, 1, *In her reluctance to leave the doomed city.* Was it not enough that she should have been warned by angels, and who had authenticated their mission by working a miracle ? No ; that was not enough, for wicked

and corrupt as Sodom was, she did not wish to leave it, and so they must needs take hold upon her and lead her out perforce. Looked at on its *Divine side*, this act of the angels shows her *privilege*; but looked at on its *human side*, it proves her *perverseness*.

Her perverseness is seen, 2, *In her tarrying behind*. "She looked back from behind." She did not keep pace with her husband and daughters. Do you account for this by bodily infirmity or fatigue? I cannot. (1) *An earnest soul energises a weakly body*. Even the cripple can run in the time of peril with remarkable swiftness and alacrity. (2) *No mention is made of her physical infirmity*. It was her soul that loved Sodom (whether for its own sake, or because she had property or relatives there does not matter); that caused her to hesitate and halt. Here is a lesson for all who have started for heaven. Be in earnest, brother. Don't lag behind. Keep pace with the swiftest. There is peril in the plain. By hesitating and tarrying many a man's soul has become petrified. Her perverseness is seen—

3. *In her looking back*. "She looked back from behind." (1) The backward look *betrayed weak faith*. Compare Luke ix. 59, with Heb. x. 38, 39. (2) The backward look *betrayed want of earnestness*. When the cry of "Fire!" is raised in any public building, what a rush there is to the doors! Who "looks back" until beyond danger? (3) The backward look *defied God*. The command was, "Look not behind thee, neither stay in all the plain, lest thou be consumed." He that defies God defies one stronger than himself. Who art thou to contend with the Almighty? Cannot Omnipotence crush a worm? If we dare God to destroy us, *He will do it*. "Remember Lot's wife."

III. HER PUNISHMENT: "She became a pillar of salt" What does this mean? There are three theories respecting this punishment. 1. That literally she became a mass of rock-salt. 2. That the storm of fire which caught her, because of her lingering in the plain, encrusted her in sulphuric matter, partly composed of saline particles. 3. That she be-

came an everlasting memorial of the folly of disobedience. Accept which you like—you must admit that the punishment was awful. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." What! is God never angry? Are you one of the modern Universalists? Is it not said that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." Ah! God has often been provoked to anger, will be angry again. **THE WRATH TO COME!**—flee from it. Tarry not, look not back. "Remember Lot's wife!"

E. D. SOLOMON.

The Preacher's Finger-Post.

Subject: THE PROCLAMATION OF CYRUS AND THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL MINISTER COMPARED.

"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah."—**EXRA i. 1, 2.**

Cyrus, which from a Persian word signifies the sun, was a statesman, conqueror, and prince of great renown. He was supposed to be the son of Cambyses, king of Persia, but his chief bio-

graphers, Xenophon and Herodotus, present his life and career in somewhat different aspects. From the Bible we learn that he subdued Babylon; ordered a return of the Jews who had been captives seventy long years, and furnished them in a liberal way with the means of re-building their Temple. Though a heathen and a bloody warrior, the Almighty made communications to him, and used him as His instrument to deliver the Jews and rebuild the Temple.*

The text suggests to us a *resemblance between the pro-*

* For Biblical references to him see Isa. xiii. 14; xxi.; xlv. 25; xlv.; xlv.; Jer. xxv. 12; II.; liv.; Dan. vii.; viii.

clamation of Cyrus and that of a Gospel preacher.

I. The proclamation of both is **MERCIFUL**. The proclamation of Cyrus meant *restoration*. (1) Restoration of lost liberty, and (2) Of lost religious privileges. His commission was to bring the Jews from their captivity into the possession of their own land, and to rebuild the glorious Temple in which their fathers had worshipped, and which their conquerors had destroyed. The Gospel preacher does a work similar to this, only of a higher kind. Restoration is his theme; he has to preach deliverance to the captives, and set men to rebuild the temple of the soul that has fallen into ruins by reason of sin.

II. The proclamation of both is **DIVINE**. The God of heaven gave Cyrus this commission,—it did not spring out of his own policy or philanthropy; it had its origin in God. "The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus." The true Gospel minister is a messenger of heaven. He has not to proclaim his own theories, but the word of God. Here is his commission: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel." No man is a true Gospel preacher whose spirit has not been "stirred up" by the Lord, and who does not feel that necessity has been laid upon him.

How does God stir up a man to preach now?

First: By a powerful revelation to his soul of the miserable moral condition of humanity. He is made to see all men in bondage and in ruin.

Secondly: By firing him with the spirit of Christly philanthropy. The love of Christ is made to constrain him, etc.

III. The proclamation of both is **UNIVERSAL**. The proclamation of Cyrus was to every Jew. Not one excluded. The old, the young, the rich, the poor, the learned, and the rude—all. It is so with the Gospel minister: his message is to all. "Go into all the world." His message is not for a tribe, a sect, a nation, a race, but for all men—men in all countries, all conditions. He calls upon every man to repent, to believe; he invites every man to liberty and peace.

IV. The proclamation of both is **PRACTICABLE**. Cyrus laid down no terms difficult to fulfil.

First: The power to return every Jew possessed. All necessary helps were promised. "Whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering."

Secondly: Cyrus furnished them liberally with the means

to rebuild their own Temple (ver. 7-11). It is so with the proclamation of the Gospel minister: every man can obey it. Every man can think, believe, repent, love. All are invited to the blessings of restoration "without money and without price."

V. The proclamation of both is EXTENSIVELY DISOBEYED. There were many who rather despised than welcomed the proclamation of Cyrus. (See chap. ix.) So it is with the Gospel minister, and so it ever has been. Out of the millions to whom the proclamation has been made, the number to welcome it has been lamentably few: they prefer their bondage, and remain in their ruined condition.

Subject: THE RELIGIOUS CAPABILITY OF MAN.

"Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things He hath done for you."—1 SAM. xii. 24.

These words are part of one of the grandest addresses delivered by one of the grandest men of ancient times—Samuel. In the seventh verse he says to his audience, "Stand still, that I may reason with you before the Lord of all the righteous acts of the Lord, which He did to you and to your fathers."

I select this verse in order to illustrate the religious capability of man. Man has many capabilities, physical, mental, social; powers that have to do with the material, the intellectual, and the social. But his distinguishing power is that which has to do with God, "of whom are all things and to whom are all things." And from the verse we infer,—

I. That man can REVERENCE God. "Only fear the Lord." The word "fear" here must not be taken in its servile sense, but in its sense of loving reverence. Reverence implies,—

First: A sense of Divine greatness. For none can reverence the contemptible or the small.

Secondly: A sense of Divine excellence. For none can reverence the morally unworthy. Of all the creatures on this globe, man only has this inward sense—a sense thus infinitely higher than a mere sense of the material beauty and grandeur of the world; it is a sense that takes the soul through all phenomena into the presence-chamber of the Infinite. We infer,—

II. That man can SERVE God. "Serve Him in truth with all your heart." There is a sense in which all things serve God. (1) Some serve Him *without* their will. All the masses of matter, organ-

ized and inorganized, serve Him. (2) Some serve Him *with* their will. All rational existences do this, and moving thus they serve Him. (3) Some serve Him *against* their will. All fiends human and angelic do this. He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him. But the service which man here is inculcated to render is *by* the will. "In truth with all your heart," that is, sincerely and cordially, which mean voluntarily in the highest sense. Man can serve God voluntarily. What other existence on this earth can do this? Man can serve Him in this way or that way: he may serve Him in every capacity—as a tradesman, merchant, politician, artist, author, scientist, or as a minister of the Gospel.

We infer,—

III. That man can **CONSIDER** God. "Consider how great things He hath done for you." Man can reflect on God, both on what He is in Himself and on what He does. By thought he can bring down the Infinite from the heavens and place Him close to the heart. He can set the Lord before him. What other creatures on this earth can do this? The eagle that pierces the clouds with a power of vision keener, and a range wider than ours, returns from its lofty flight to its lonely eyrie without one thought of God.

CONCLUSION: How great is man! Lord, what is man!

Subject: **GOD'S LOVE FOR MAN.**

"The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."—**JEREMIAH xxxi. 3.**

The subject of these words, is *God's love for man*. "I have loved thee." God is a personality. "*I*." He is not an impersonal power or substance, but an individuality distinct from the universe, as the architect from his building, the author from his book, the lyrist from his lyre. "Have loved," God is not mere *intellectuality*. He has sensibility, emotion, heart: He loves. What a blessed thought that love reigns in the Maker and Master of the universe.

We learn from the passage,

I. That His love for man is **PERSONAL**. "I have loved thee." God's love is not a mere general feeling of loving sympathy for His creatures, a mere good-will to all. But it is directed to individuals. "I have loved thee"—*man*. That God loves the individual man, may be seen first from the *distinguishing constitution He has given him*. He has endowed him with more faculties of enjoyment than any other creature in the universe

possesses. He has not only the five senses to drink in all the pleasures that come from material nature; but He has given him *intellect*, by which he can enjoy the pleasures of meditation; *social affection*, by which he can enjoy the blessings of friendship; *religious affinities*, by which he can have sympathy with the source of all life and blessedness. That God loves the individual may be seen,

Secondly: By His *wonderful mercy in the mediation of His Son*. "God so loved the world," etc. Yes; but He loved the world, not in the bulk, but the individual. Because He loved each human soul, and thus He loves all. The interest He felt in the one incited, extended, and intensified His interest in the race. Christ came to find out the one lost sheep as well as the many—came as the expression, medium, and messenger of Divine love for the unit, and therefore for the whole. Christ, in His mediation, did not deal with the mass through the individual, but with the individual through the mass. In truth, souls cannot be massed together. Each has a separate world of immeasurable power and interest in itself. The one soul was to Him of unspeakable worth. His first disciples He called separately and by name. The apostles followed His example in this respect. They ad-

dressed men individually. Besides all this, each Christly man has ever felt that God's love was personal, that the Infinite Father loved him. Paul says, He "loved me and gave Himself for me."

Now this fact seems to illustrate (1) *The character of God*. See His *omniscience*. With Him the atom is not lost in the universe, the minute is not overlooked in the vast, nor one soul amidst the unnumbered hierarchies of spirits. Each soul stands out distinct to His eye. See His *condescension*. How wonderful that He should even notice one man! "When I consider the heavens the work of Thy hands." See His *fatherhood*. Does the human father love his children in the bulk? No, each is of inexpressible interest to him, and for each he labours. Thus with the Infinite Father: He says in relation to each, "I have loved thee"—thee Abraham, thee Moses, thee Job, thee Daniel, thee Paul, thee John, etc. "I have loved thee." This fact serves to illustrate (2) *The obligation of man*. The Creator has loved thee, O man! Remember this, and do not treat thyself as nothing in the universe. Remember this, and repent of all indifference towards thine Almighty Maker and Infinite Friend. Remember this, and let thy heart be fired with a supreme affection for Him.

We learn from the passage,
II. That His love for man is ETERNAL. "Everlasting love." It is a beginningless love; there was never a period when it did not exist. It is "everlasting" and therefore,—

First: *Humanity* had nothing to do with *exciting* it. Before there were human sins or sorrows, virtues or vices, prayers or praises, it existed. Unnumbered ages before man existed, this love was a deep unfathomable ocean. Men were as real to God before their creation as they were afterwards, or ever will be. Each individual of the millions that will ultimately complete the mighty sum of the human race, was as great a reality to Him before the foundations of the world were laid as they will ever be. He saw the end from the beginning.

"To Thee, great God, there's nothing old appears,
To Thee there's nothing new."

Secondly: *Christ* had nothing to do with *procuring* it. There is a miserable theology, old and still extant, that represents Christ as appeasing the wrath and evoking the love of the Infinite towards man. Impious absurdity, horrid blasphemy, this! Christ's mediation was the *effect*, not the *cause* of God's love for man. His mediation was no *after-thought*. The

Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world. As all the oaks in all the forests that ever have been or ever will be are but the development of the first acorn, all the mediatorial triumphs of Christ are but the outgrowths of God's eternal purpose of love for mankind.

We learn from the passage,

III. That His love for man is ATTRACTING. "Therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee."

First: How attracting it is in its *nature*! Kindness is always attractive; and its attracting power is always in proportion to its *spontaneity*, *disinterestedness*, and *maganimity*. God's kindness is infinite in these respects, and therefore is as powerful as moral power can be.

Secondly: How attracting it is in its *manifestation*! Look at it (1) In nature. The world overflows with Divine kindness. It shines in the heavens, it blooms in the fields and in the meadows, it murmurs in the brooks, it booms in the ocean, it shows itself in all forms, and it speaks in all voices. What human soul has not at times felt the attractive power of God's goodness as it appears in nature in her various moods and seasons? Look at it (2) In revelation. Look at the grand *subject* of the revelation—Christ. There is love here in the "wonderful," and wonder

always attracts. Look at the form of the revelation. It comes in the most attractive truths for the intellect, the most transporting poetry for the imagination, the most mighty *suasives* for the heart.

**Subject: SOUL-PONDERING ON
DIVINE SUBJECTS.**

"But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."
—LUKE II. 19.

The narrative in which these words are found is of transcendent and imperishable interest. Wonderful things had entered the soul of Mary, and she pondered them. We offer a remark or two on the necessity of pondering Divine subjects.

I. These ponderings are necessary in order to UNDERSTAND THE FULL MEANING of truth. Objective truth comes to us not in its pure essence. It comes to us as a germ in a shell, which we can break only by some ponderings. It comes to us as a stream, generally more or less impure; it is

only by pondering that we can filter the waters. In fact the spirit of truth can only be received by devout and earnest meditation. This winnows away the chaff, this filters the stream.

II. These ponderings are necessary in order to APPROPRIATE THE VIRTUES of truth. Truth is the nourishment of the soul; it is bread and water. But, like food for the body, its nutriment is extracted by digestion. Independent meditation is the digestive faculty of the soul: this turns the food into blood, fibre, and muscle.

III. These ponderings are necessary in order to DEVELOP THE POWER of truth. The power of truth is not in words or occasional actions, but in the whole life. When truth is taken up into the soul by meditation, it becomes part and parcel of itself. The word is made flesh, and then as a power it is (1) *natural*, not artificial, (2) *constant*, not occasional, and (3) *influential*, not weak.

A DISCURSIVE YET EXTRAORDINARY PREACHER.—He stepped into his balloon and was up and away. The text seemed to suggest something, and that something else, and so he was upon a sea of fancies, a sea of glass mingled with fire—crystal thoughts and burning passions; the audience responding in tears and laughter; hits at current follies, blows at orthodoxy and heterodoxy, the passionate entreaty, magnificent description; every sail spread, every inch of steam on, he ploughs through the sea, dashing the spray over you, and comes at last careering into port, gently and sweetly as a June sunset.—*Haven*.

Seeds of Sermons from the Minor Prophets.

If the Bible as a whole is inspired, it is of vast importance that all its Divine ideas should be brought to bear upon the living world of men. Though the pulpit is the organ Divinely intended for this work, it has been doing it hitherto in a miserably partial and restricted method. It selects isolated passages, and leaves whole chapters and books for the most part untouched. Its conduct to the Minor Prophets may be taken as a case in point. How seldom are they resorted to for texts! and yet they abound with splendid passages throbbing with Divine ideas. It is our purpose to go through this section of the Holy Word; selecting, however, only such verses in each chapter and book as seem the most suggestive of truths of the most vital interest and universal application.

Having passed rapidly through HOSHA, JOEL, and AMOS, we come now to OBADIAH. Of the history of Obadiah we literally know nothing. His name, which signifies Worshipper of Jehovah, and his short prophecy afford the only information concerning him. From verses 11 to 14, which undoubtedly contain an allusion to the exultation of the Edomites over the capture and plunder of Jerusalem, we may with some confidence infer that he flourished after the capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. In all probability he must have lived near the time of Jeremiah; and indeed there is almost a verbal agreement between his utterance in verses 1 to 8 and those contained in Jeremiah xlix. If we suppose his prophecy was delivered between the year a.c. 588, when Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldeans, and the termination of the siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, we shall not be far wrong. As to his prophecy, it is the *shortest* in the Bible: one chapter comprehends all. Its subject is the destruction of Edom on account of its cruelty to Judah, Edom's mother, and the restoration of the Jews. Its style is marked by animation, regularity, and clearness.

No. CXL.

Subject: SOCIAL CRUELTY. (1)
A SIN AGAINST THE CREATOR.

"For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. But thou shouldst not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldst thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldst thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress. Thou shouldst not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldst not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on

their substance in the day of their calamity; Neither shouldst thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape: neither shouldst thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress. For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head. For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been."
—OBADIAH i. 10-16.

Social cruelty is the grand subject of these verses, and the cruelty is that which one brother perpetrates on another, Esau on Jacob. "Wrong or violence is all the more reprehensible when it is committed against a brother. The fraternal

relation in which Edom stood towards Judah is still more sharply defined by the name Jacob, since Esau and Jacob were twin brothers. The consciousness that the Israelites were their brethren, ought to have impelled the Edomites to render helpful support to the oppressed Judeans. Instead of this, they not only revelled with scornful and malignant pleasure in the misfortune of the brother nation, but endeavoured to increase it still further by rendering active support to the enemy. The hostile behaviour of Edom arose from envy at the election of Israel, like the hatred of Esau toward Jacob (Gen. xxvii. 41), which was transmitted to his descendants and came out openly in the time of Moses in the unbrotherly refusal to allow the Israelites to pass in a peaceable manner through their land" (Num. xx.).—*Delitzsch.*

These verses present to us social cruelty in four different features,—as a *sin against the Creator*—perpetrated against a brother, *specially offensive to God*—as *working in various forms from generation to generation.*

We shall devote a brief homiletical sketch to each of these.

The passage implies that social cruelty is a sin against the Creator; and the truth of this will appear from four subjects of thought.

I. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE HUMAN SOUL. Social cruelty is against the normal condition of the human spirit. He who will study his own spiritual constitution will not fail to observe three great facts in relation to this subject.

First: *The existence of social*

love. Social sympathy is one of the primary elements of our nature: its instinct is to render service to others and to seek their goodwill and fellowship. The malign is not inherent in man. Cruelty in him is not innate, as in the tiger and the bear. We are made to love and to be loved.

Secondly: *The instinctive condemnation of cruel acts.* Never in the history of a soul has it instinctively approved of acts of cruelty as perpetrated either by itself or others. Conscience thunders against all such deeds: on the benevolent, and on the benevolent only, it smiles.

Thirdly: *Innate craving for social approbation.* The soul not only deprecates the ill-will and loathing of society, but yearns deeply and always for its approbation. But this can only be attained by benevolent deeds. Now, inasmuch as the constitution of the soul is an expression of the Divine Will, and that constitution is against cruelty, cruelty is an outrage on the divine order.

Again, that social cruelty is a sin against the Creator will appear if we consider,—

II. THE COMMON RELATION OF ALL TO GOD. He is the Father of all men. No one of the human race is nearer to Him than another. Each is His offspring and bears His image. And between all there is therefore the relationship of brotherhood. It cannot be the will of the Great Father that His children should act as wild beasts, inflicting cruelty on each other, and thus din His benevolent ears with the groans and shrieks of His offspring. What human

father does not deprecate one of his children inflicting an injury on another, and does not ardently desire that each should work for the other? Are we more loving than He who made us? Does the brooklet contain more than the ocean?

That social cruelty is a sin against the Creator will appear if we consider,—

III. THE COMMON INTEREST OF CHRIST IN THE RACE. Christ took on Him the nature of man. He was the Son of man, not the Son of Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, bond or free, but the Son of man. The nature of all men was in Him. He wore the nature of every man, He propounded doctrines for every man, He enacted laws for every man, He tasted death for every man. He was not ashamed to call us brethren. He loved the world and gave Himself for it. How abhorrent then must it be to Him and to His blessed Father for one man to inflict cruelty upon another.

That social cruelty is a sin against the Creator will appear if we consider further,—

IV. THE UNIVERSAL TEACHING OF THE BIBLE. The whole Decalogue, as reduced and enforced by Christ, consists in loving God with all our hearts, and our neighbour as ourselves. And everywhere in the New Testament are we exhorted to be kindly affectioned one to another, to recompense to no man evil for evil.

CONCLUSION. How obvious it is, then, that social cruelty in all its forms is a sin against the Creator. The man who injures his fellow-creature is a rebel against the government of the universe.

NO. OXII.

Subject: SOCIAL CRUELTY.

(2) PERPETRATED AGAINST A BROTHER, SPECIALLY OFFENSIVE TO GOD.

"For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them."—OBADIAH i. 10, 11.

The cruelty here is not the cruelty merely of one man against another, but of one who is in close natural relationship to the other, children of the same parents. Strange as it may be, it is nevertheless a fact that a brother's enmity is often the most savage and unrelenting. How can this fact be accounted for? From the greater amount of his natural love. True, the greater amount of love a man has in him, the greater capacity he has for wrath. Wrath is but love in flames. The measure of a creature's love determines his power of anger. The little shallow lake cannot yield that amount of boiling steam which the ocean can produce. No love, no hatred; small love, small hatred; large love, large hatred. A brother is supposed naturally to have more love in him towards his brother than any other. Hence, when this love is kindled into wrath, it is often terribly furious.

But the truth contained in the text is this, that a brother's cruelty is specially offensive to Jehovah. It is for "thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and

thou shalt be cut off for ever." But why should it be specially offensive?

I. Because the OBLIGATION TO LOVE IS STRONGER. It is the duty of all men to love one another, but more especially the duty of a brother to love his brother. Children of the same parents are specially bound by nature to be one in sympathy and in heart.

II. Because the CHIEF HUMAN INSTITUTION IS OUTRAGED. What is the chief human institution? That of a family. Schools, governments, churches, are not to be compared to the family institution. The government of the family is the model government; the school of the family is the model school; the church of the family is the model church. But when the members of this family become cruel to each other, this human institution is outraged.

III. Because the TENDEREST HUMAN LOVES ARE WOUNDED. When brother inflicts injury on brother, parental hearts bleed, and sisters are struck with an agony of grief.

CONCLUSION:—We wonder not, then, that cruelty towards brothers is more offensive to God than any other cruelty. Solomon has said that a "brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle." The closer the relationship, in case of dispute, the wider the breach and the more difficult the reconciliation. A really offended brother is often harder to win back to friendship than the taking of a strong city or the breaking of the bars of a castle. Take the case of Cain and Abel, Joseph and his

brethren, Absalom and Abiram. In all these cases nothing less than death was plotted and sought. Why is this? Why is a brother's anger so implacable? (1) Great love has been wounded. The more love, the greater capability of indignation. How strong the love of a real brother! (2) Great services have been ill requited. What attentions a true brother shows, how numerous, delicate, and self-sacrificing! If the object of all has proved utterly unworthy of them, how intense his chagrin, how poignant his distress! (3) Great hopes are frustrated. The offended brother anticipated a brother's sympathy, counsel, friendship, through all the chequered scenes of life. These hopes are shattered and the wreck is vexatious beyond measure. (4) Great reluctance on the offender's side to acknowledge the fault and seek reconciliation. Strange as it may seem, it is yet true; a man would sooner offer an apology to any one than to his relations, especially to brothers.

No. CXIII.

Subject: SOCIAL CRUELTY. (3)
AS WORKING IN VARIOUS FORMS
FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.

"But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress. Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea,

thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity; neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress. For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head. For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been."—OBAD. i. 12-16.

Here we have a sketch of the workings of this cruelty towards Judah when it was in great distress, suffering, and peril.

I. CRUELTY HAS VARIOUS FORMS OF WORKING. Look at the forms here.

First: *The lack of sympathy* when Judah was in distress. "Thou shouldest not have looked," etc. Greatly did Judah need their sympathy at this time. "Strangers carried away captive their forces;" Babylon entered their country and their city and carried them away as captives. Foreigners entered into his gates and cast lots upon Jerusalem. The city, after a long siege, was broken up; and the great officers of the king of Babylon came and sat at the gates and cast lots on the spoils of Jerusalem. It was indeed a "day of calamity," as it is three times expressed in the verses. Terrible and never to be forgotten was that day when Babylon came with all its forces into Judea, entered

the city, and bore away as captives the inhabitants.

Now, in their distress how did Edom their brother act? They stood and looked carelessly on. Want of sympathy with suffering is a sin in the sight of God. Heaven denounces men not only for the evil they actually perpetrate, but for the neglect of the good they ought to accomplish. These Edomites were like the priests with the Levite.

Secondly: *Positive rejoicing* when Judah was in distress. It is said "they rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of destruction," they "spoke proudly in the day of distress. They seem to have gloated over their afflictions.

Thirdly: *Participation in the work of their enemies.* They laid their hands on their substance, they cut off those that did escape, they delivered up those that did remain in the day of their distress.

Social cruelty ever has had and still has many forms of working. Cold indifference, malignant rejoicing, as well as positive inflictions. See the charge brought against the Edomites on this occasion.—Ps. cxxxii, 7; Ezek. xx. 12.

II. OMNISCIENCE OBSERVES IT IN ALL ITS FORMS. God's eye was on the Edomites, noted not only their positive acts but the workings of their inner souls. Sin in all its operations is ever more under the eye of Omnipotence. He knows the way each spirit takes. He searcheth all hearts and understandeth all their thoughts. The ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord and He pondereth their doings, they are in every place behold-

ing the evil and the good." This fact, for an incontrovertible fact it is, should be practically realized. And if practically realized it will have a four-fold effect on the soul. (1) It will stimulate to great spiritual activity. When the eye of an intelligence falls right on us the glance stirs the soul. What soul could sleep if it felt the eye of God ever resting on it? (2) It will restrain from the commission of sin. Did we feel His eye ever on us, should we yield to temptation? "Thou God seest me" is a powerful preventive. (3) It will excite the desire for pardon. God has seen all the errors and sins of the past, and they are great in number and enormity. Since He sees them, they must either be punished or absolved. (4) It will brace the soul in the performance of duty. Moses endured as seeing Him who is invisible. He knows our trials and our difficulties. Therefore let us be magnanimous under trial and brave in danger. Of God all seeing "What can 'scape the eye, deceive His heart Omniscient?"

III. A JUST AND TERRIBLE RETRIBUTION AWAITS IT IN ALL ITS FORMS. "The day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen; as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head," etc., etc. Retribution is a settled law in the material universe. "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." There is a rebound in every sin. No crime has ever been committed that does not come back with a terrible rebound on the soul of the author. "They shall drink

and they shall swallow down." To swallow up and to be swallowed up, is the world's destiny.

No. CXIV.

Subject: AN OLD SIN.

"For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. But thou shouldst not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldst thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldst thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress. Thou shouldst not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldst not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity; neither shouldst thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldst thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress."—*OBAD. i. 10-14.*

These words present to us an old sin in one or two aspects.

I. Here is an old sin WORKING in the history of posterity. "For thy violence against thy brother Jacob," etc. What was the sin? "And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand: then will I slay my brother Jacob" (Gen.

xxvii. 41). Envy was the sin; and this envy towards Jacob or Israel was transmitted from generation to generation. The spirit of envy that was kindled in the heart of Esau towards his brother Jacob glowed and flamed with more or less intensity for ages in the soul of Edom towards the descendants of Jacob. It was shown in the unbrotherly refusal of the request of Moses to allow the children of Israel to pass through the land (see Numb. xx. 14-21). Edom continued to be the inveterate foe of Israel. Neither a man's sinful passion nor deed stops with himself. Like a spring from the mountain it runs down posterity, often gathering volume as it proceeds. No sinner liveth to himself. One man's sins may vibrate in the soul of another a thousand ages on. This is shown in almost every chapter of the history of nations. The vengeance which the cruelty of one nation kindles in its victim will not go out at the conquest. It will burn on until it breaks out in fury, and wreaks vengeance upon its own conqueror. Hence he that taketh the sword always perishes by the sword. This fact should—

First: *Impress us with the awfulness of our existence.* It is true that in one sense we are little beings, occupying but a small space in the universe, and soon pass away and are forgotten; still there goes forth from us an influence that shall never end. We throw seed into the mind of the world that will germinate, grow, and multiply indefinitely, and yield harvests of misery or joy. This fact should

Secondly: *Impress us with*

the duty of every lover of the universe to protest against sin in individuals. A man may say, What does it matter to you that I sin? My reply is, It does matter to me as a benevolent citizen of the universe. If your sin merely damned yourself, it is sad enough; but it does not end there; its pernicious influence on the universe is inconceivably great and calamitous.

II. Here is an old sin REPROBATED BY GOD in the history of posterity. God's eye traced it from Esau down. How does He treat it? He reprobates it. "For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. But thou shouldst not have looked on the day of thy brother," etc., etc. Delitzsch renders the words, "Look not at the day of thy brother," and regards verses 12 to 14 as a prohibition; but we see not the authority for that. These Edomites, it would seem from the words, did stand on the other side without rendering help in the day when the stranger entered Jerusalem; they did "rejoice" over the children of Judah at that period; they did "speak proudly" in the day of distress; they did "enter into the gate" of God's people in the "day of calamity;" they did lay "hands on their substance" on that day; they did stand on the "crossway" and "cut" those off "that did escape." The Omniscent

eye saw all this. The Jews appeal to Him for an account of the cruelty of these Edomites. "Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof" (Ps. cxxxvii. 7). For all this God says shame should come on them, and shame did come. They are blotted from the history of the living. God condemns sin wherever it is, however it comes, and whatever its pedigree.

It may be asked, if it were the envy of Esau that thus came down from age to age in his posterity, and worked these deeds of crime, where is the justice of God in reprobating them? They only inherit the

iniquities of their fathers. We answer—(1) Sin is essentially abhorrent to Jehovah. It is the "abominable thing" which He hates. (2) The very essence of sin is its freeness. Sin is not a forced act; no deed performed by a man against his will has any moral character, or can in a moral sense be either good or bad. The posterity of Esau were not compelled to cherish and develop the envy of their great progenitor. Each one could have quenched it. Each, no doubt, felt it to be contrary to his moral nature, and that it ought to be expelled. The Almighty knew that each man was free, hence His reprobation of sin wherever found.

Biblical Criticism.

Subject: Dr. Davidson's Criticism on Dean Alford's Greek Testament.

THAT the text translated by Dean Alford does not possess great value, is clear to all who are familiar with the criticism of the New Testament. Besides being liable to the objections which a diplomatic text incurs, it bears evidence of haste, ignorance, and incorrectness. The author was generally inclined to the oldest readings. So far he followed a right direction. But he did not give sufficient attention to the considerations that modify the element of antiquity—to internal and other evidences that correct or limit it. This excessive attachment to readings best attested perhaps by external evidence, has given rise to unintelligible renderings, as in Heb. iv. 2, where the text adopted yields no proper sense.

He has produced out of it the words, "But the word of hearing did not profit them, unmingled as they were in faith with those that heard it."

For the benefit of English readers, notices of different readings are subjoined, but on no clear principle. The statements are arbitrary, because important variations are unnoticed while trifling ones are given. The author has adduced varieties of the text pretty much at haphazard. The chief variations should have been stated, or none at all. Any intermediate plan is all but useless, as far as the instructing of ordinary readers is concerned. Thus, in Mark i. 1, the words "the Son of God" are omitted on sufficient authority by Von Tischendorf. Alford, however, has no notice of the true reading. In John ix. 35, "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" Von Tischendorf's text is, "Dost thou believe in the Son of man?" but the latter is unnoticed. Luke xxiv. 40 is omitted by Tischendorf, yet Alford gives it without note or comment. In Mark viii. 26 the words, "Nor tell it to any in the village" are properly omitted by Tischendorf; but Alford inserts them without remark. In John xxi. 23, the last words of the verse, "What is that to thee?" omitted by Tischendorf, are unnoticed. In Luke xxiv. 51, 52, the words, "and carried up into heaven, and they worshipped Him," which are more than suspicious, are inserted without remark. The same is true of Acts x. 6, "He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do," omitted by Tischendorf; of Col. i. 2, "And the Lord Jesus Christ," of 2 Tim. iv. 22, "Jesus Christ," which also should be omitted; of Heb. x. 30, where "says the Lord" is left out by Tischendorf; of 1 Peter i. 22, "through the Spirit," which is spurious though unnoticed; of Acts xvi. 13, where there is a different reading from that rendered by Alford; of Acts xiii. 20, 21, where an important reading adopted by Tischendorf runs, "gave their land as an inheritance about 450 years. And after these things He gave Judges until Samuel the prophet;" of Acts xx. 4, "as far as Asia," which Von Tischendorf's text leaves out; of Acts xx. 15, "and tarried at Trogyllium," which should be omitted; of

Acts xxi. 8, "we that were of Paul's company;" of Luke xxiii. 23, "and of the chief priests;" of Luke viii. 45, "and sayest Thou, Who touched me?" of John x. 29, where another reading is, "That which the Father has given me is greater than all."

These are but a few cases in which readings well attested and usually received by Von Tischendorf, are ignored by the Dean in his notes. His silence would not be censurable in regard to them, did he not in many cases note such as are of much inferior importance or trifling, as "*And*" in Gal. iii. 29; Col. iii. 17; Rev. ix. 11, xxii. 12-17; "*Amen*" in 1 Tim. vi. 21; "Christ Jesus," instead of "the Lord Jesus Christ," in Titus i. 4. In view of such treatment it is impossible to consider it other than arbitrary. It may be questioned if these critical notes about MSS. and versions can be useful to the general reader. They are very brief, and will often suggest no intelligible idea to the mind of those who are not scholars. The Vatican, the Alexandrine, the Sinaitic, the later Vatican, the Parisian, the Clermont MSS. need not be paraded before common readers. Nor are such remarks as—"The testimony of the ancient MSS. is divided;" "These words are not found in several of the most ancient MSS., but are contained in others;" "The ancient authorities are divided;" "Several of the oldest MSS. read" so and so—of any practical benefit to the persons for whom his revision was intended. Besides, the notes cannot be relied on implicitly, because they are not always correct. The author has been hasty, or imperfectly acquainted with the evidences on which readings rest. Thus, in Eph. v. 22, the short reading,—"*Ye wives, unto your own husbands as unto the Lord,*" is said to be supported by "*the oldest MSS.*;" whereas of the three oldest, only the Vatican reads so; the other two, the Sinaitic and Alexandrine, do not. In Eph. v. 28, the word "*also*" is said to be the reading of the oldest MSS., whereas it is not of the Sinaitic. In Rev. iv. 11, the Sinaitic reading is erroneously given. It is not, "*O Lord who art our Lord and end;*" but, "*O Lord who art our Lord and God.*" In Rev. xviii. 3, "*the wine of,*" is not omitted by

all the most ancient MSS.; it is in the Sinaitic and the later Vatican. The omission is sanctioned only by one old MS., the Alexandrine. A note on Matthew xvii. 21 states, "The verse is found in the other ancient MSS., versions and Fathers, except our two oldest MSS." This needs limitation; for it is in the Curetonian Syriac, a version older than any known MS. The note on Gal. v. 16 has no meaning: "Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil," etc., is said to be the reading of the most ancient MSS.; but the received version is taken from the very same text as the revised one here presented, and there is no various reading among the ancient MSS. The note is meaningless or misleading.

Regarding the translation offered by the Dean, it is undoubtedly an improvement upon the received one. Where it departs from the latter, the deviations commonly express the sense more accurately. Not only is the original text represented by the translation better than the usual one; the translation itself is superior to that so long in use among English-speaking people. The Dean has done good service, and deserves commendation for it. His revised version, however, is not satisfactory. Perhaps he undertook a work for which he had not the necessary qualifications. His knowledge of Greek was not sufficiently comprehensive or exact. It seems, too, that he worked rapidly, performing tasks perfunctorily, which required more time and labour than he expended on them. In support of these remarks, it is only needful to produce a few examples of blundering.

In Matt. xxvi. 15, the incorrect rendering of the verb is retained, "*covenanted* with him," instead of "*weighed* to him." The version of Col. ii. 3, "wherein are all the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge," is erroneous; for the adjective "*hidden*" is the predicate.

Hebrew vi. 1 is rendered "Therefore leaving discourse concerning the beginning of Christ," etc., which gives a meaning foreign to the original.

In Luke viii. 29, πολλοῖς χρόνοις is translated "oftentimes," a meaning obviously wrong. The phrase can only mean "for a long time."

In Acts xxiv. 14, *αἵρεσις* is wrongly rendered "heresy." The word means a "schismatical party or sect."

There is also a mistranslation and misapprehension of the original in Heb. x. 20, "by a new and living way which He inaugurated," etc. These words, following immediately "by the blood of Jesus," in the 19th verse, suggest a meaning which the writer of the epistle did not intend. The preposition "by" at the beginning of the 20th verse perverts the sense; and the true rendering, "a new and living way," etc., shows that this language characterizes the *εἰσόδος*, or "access," of the 19th verse. 1 Tim. vi. 10, "For the root of all evils is the love of money;" this should be, "The love of money is a root of all the evils."

Heb. i. 9, "therefore God, even thy God, anointed thee," etc. This should be, "therefore, O God, thy God anointed thee," etc.

Heb. x. 27, "but a certain fearful receiving of judgment." The alteration of the received version is wrong. The word here translated "receiving" means nothing but a "looking for," or "expectation."

Heb. xii. 26, 27, an adverb is rendered "once more," which means "once," and nothing else.

Acts xii. 5, "without ceasing," is erroneous. It should be "urgently," or "earnestly."

Acts xxii. 25, "And as they bound him down with the thongs." Here the verb cannot mean "bound down," but "stretched out;" and the true rendering is, "they stretched him out for the cords," or lash.

In Acts xxiv. 3, "always" is a meaning which the adverb *πάντοτε* does not bear. It signifies "in every way."

In Acts xiii. 48, "as many as were disposed to eternal life believed," is not the right sense; for the verb can only mean, "as many as had been appointed or ordained to eternal life." The Divine purpose lies in it.

In 1 Cor. viii. 8, "meat shall not be reckoned to us before God," is in every respect an erroneous rendering. It should be, "meat will not present us before God," or "will not represent us to God."

It would be easy to multiply examples of incorrect tenses, as in John vi. 44, "I raise him up," where the present should be a future; Luke xxi. 8, "the time draweth near," where it should be, "the time is at hand"; 2 Cor. iv. 4, "hath blinded," for "blinded," 2 Cor. xiii. 10, "the Lord hath given me," for "gave me"; Gal. iii. 1, "who hath bewitched you" for "bewitched 'you'"; 1 Cor. xvi. 15, "have set themselves" for "set themselves." In Rom. xi. 34, 35, three tenses are wrongly rendered.

Nor has the use of the article been properly attended to, as is evident from Matt. x. 24, where *the* disciple and *the* servant should not be. In like manner in Gal. iv. 5, "*the* law" should be "law"; "*the* resurrection" in Acts xvii. 32, "*a* resurrection"; "*the* Church" in 1 Cor. xiv. 4, "*a* Church."

The omission of representatives of Greek words in the translation also mars its accuracy, as appears from John xvii. 25, "O righteous Father, the world knew Thee not." Here the conjunction is neglected, "O righteous Father, *and* the world knew Thee not." The insertion of words having no representatives in Greek is equally prejudicial, as in Matt. xxvi. 26, "blessed *it*," which gives a wrong meaning.

While the author has contributed to uniformity of rendering, often translating the same word or phrase into the same English wherever it occurs, he has not carried out the principle far enough. Thus, in Rev. ii. 14, 15, the same Greek word is "teaching" in one verse and "doctrine" in the next. And the same verb, in 1 Cor. xv. 1 and Gal. i. 2, is "*make known*" and "*certify*," without reason. Again, in Rom. ii. 18 and Phil. i. 10, the same words are differently rendered; "*ap-provest* the things" in the one place, and "*discern* the things" in the other. Why also should the same verb in the same verse be differently translated, "*release*" and "*let go*," in John xix. 12? Conversely, it is wrong to render two different words in the same manner unless there be a necessity, which does not always exist, as in James i. 15, "*bringeth forth*"; in Rev. xvii. 17, where "*fulfil*" stands for different Greek words in the same verse.

The Dean's work, notwithstanding its many defects, has been useful in showing the need of a fresh revision of the English New Testament. Whatever may be thought of his capacity or knowledge in matters of textual criticism and Greek translation, his services deserve recognition. It is also creditable to him that he tried to be impartial, without allowing theological prepossessions to override the knowledge of the scholar. In a very few cases perhaps his leanings may be detected; but it is almost impossible to be absolutely impartial. His judgment, indeed, was not of the highest order. That it lacked fineness of discernment is plain enough from the proposed version of Phil. ii. 6, where "deemed not His equality with God a thing to grasp at," introduces something like an absurdity—"He deemed not what He had a thing to grasp at"! The insertion of the little word *His* is totally unwarranted, and mars the right version of the words.

Homiletical Breviaries.

No. CXC.

Subject: TWOFOLD SUBJUGATION OF HUMANITY TO GOD—
PHARAOH AND PAUL.

"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God."—Rom. xiv. 11.

"Intreat the Lord your God, that He may take away this death from me" [Pharaoh].—Exodus x. 17.

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me [Paul] to do?"—Acts ix. 6.

The passage from Romans is taken from Isaiah xlv. 23, and is quoted substantially, though not verbally. It predicts the universal subjugation of mankind to the Divine will. Every tongue shall confess. All shall solemnly acknowledge the supremacy of the Divine ruler.

Now, the universal subjugation does not mean universal salvation, for there is a *twofold* subjugation of humanity to the Divine

will. The one is represented by Pharaoh and the other by Paul. I. The one subjugation is by conviction of God's terrible power; the other, by conviction of His love. An overwhelming sense of God's great power compelled Pharaoh to "bow his knee" before the Almighty. He felt that further rebellion would be his ruin; and for a moment he yielded. Paul's subjugation sprang from a conviction of God's love in Christ. The voice said to him, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." This brought him down, smote his rebellious will, reduced him to subjection. So it is ever; wicked men and devils are made to bow by a sense of God's force and God's power. Good men and angels bow from a sense of His love. II. The one subjugation involves moral ANGUISH, the other moral ENJOYMENT. What a state of agony was Pharaoh in when he uttered these words, "Intreat the Lord your God," etc! He was stricken with a panic, and was in the agony of alarm. But what joy came into Paul when the heavenly voice of Mercy said to him, "Rise, stand upon thy feet," etc! The one subjugation therefore involves heaven, the other, hell. (1) In the one, there is the sense of absolute slavery; in the other, a sense of freedom. (2) In the one, there is the sense of overwhelming terror; in the other, the sense of hopefulness. (3) In the one, there is the sense of Divine favour; in the other, the sense of Divine antagonism. III. The one becomes a ministry of DESTRUCTION to others; the other, a ministry of SALVATION. Pharaoh, the moment the panic abated, rushes on and brings destruction on himself and his mighty hosts. Paul begins a beneficent ministry which issues in the salvation of hundreds of contemporaries and increasing thousands of souls through subsequent ages.

CONCLUSION: In which way wilt thou be subjugated, my reader? It is not for thee to determine whether thou shalt bow thy knee or not: thy knee *must* bow, thy tongue *must* confess; but it is with thee to determine *how* thou wilt do it—by a sense of God's power or of His love, by coercion or by choice.

NO. CXCI.

Subject: CHRIST'S DEATH A MAN'S DESTRUCTION.

"Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died."—ROM. xiv. 15.

From the words we learn four things: I. Christ died to save ALL. Christ died for all, He tasted death for every man. "He is

the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." His death was a *fact* in the Divine government in which all are interested, a *provision* of Divine mercy, like the sun, the air, and the various elements of nature, from which all could derive the same supplies. He died *for* all, not *instead* of all. II. Though He died to save all, some will be destroyed. This is implied, "Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died." This proves the demonstration that Christ died for all, is not incompatible with a man's destruction. The *fact* has no practical influence on a man unless he studies it, and he may study it or not, rightly or not, the *provision* does not stream its blessings into a man, irrespective of his choice or efforts. The sun will not give its light to a man unless he open his eyes, nor will the water allay his burning thirst unless he drinks it in. "Ye will not come unto me," etc. III. The destruction of the man for whom Christ died may be effected by his BROTHER. "Destroy not him." Paul is speaking of a brother. "If thy brother," etc. One man can and often does spiritually ruin another by his suggestions, his spirit, his example. Whilst God saves man by man, the devil damns man by man. Through man the spiritually restorative and the spiritually destructive forces of the moral universe are everlastingly working. IV. The brother may effect his destruction by A TRIFLING THING. "Destroy not him with thy meat." By urging thy ceremonial observances, thou art likely to ruin him: leave him free to his own conscience. As an invisible atom can destroy animal life, a little sin can damn a soul.

No. CXOII.

Subject: REPUTATION.

"Let not then your good be evil spoken of."—ROMANS xiv. 16.

From this we learn: I. That a good man may lose his reputation. He may do so, not only by a *really* guilty act,—for a good man may fall into sin, and one sin may ruin his reputation,—but by a *seemingly* guilty act. He may make mistakes, commit imprudences. Slander is Argos-eyed, and is ever on the watch for imperfections of character, especially in those who profess to live the higher life. Do not judge men by their reputation. Character is one thing, reputation another. Many good men have bad reputations, and many bad men comparatively good ones. II. A good man should ANXIOUSLY GUARD his reputation.

"Let not your good be evil spoken of." A good man's reputation is one of his chief implements of social usefulness. Next to character, it is the dearest thing he has.

"Who steals my purse, steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
But he that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed."—*Shakespeare.*

Take away a preacher's moral reputation, and he is powerless for good.

CONCLUSION: Avoid every appearance of evil.

NO. CXCIIL

Subject: MORAL GOODNESS.

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men."—*ROM. xiv. 17, 18.*

Three remarks are suggested concerning moral goodness, or true religion. I. It is THE REIGN OF GOD IN THE SOUL. It is spoken of as "the kingdom of God." What is the reign? It is (1) the reign of reality, in contradistinction to that of appearance; (2) the reign of spirit, in contradistinction to the reign of matter; it is (3) the reign of love, in contradistinction to the reign of selfishness; it is (4) the reign of the absolute, in contradistinction to the reign of the contingent and fleeting. II. It is A SPIRITUAL SERVICE RENDERED TO CHRIST. "For he that in these things serveth Christ." What things? Not in meat and drink, not in mere ceremonies and ritualities, but in spiritual exercises. "Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." To serve Christ, is the grand end of being; to serve Christ, is to serve in the highest sense your own interests, the good of the universe, and the will of God. III. It is the HIGHEST GLORY OF MAN. It ensures two things (1) the favour of God. "Acceptable to God." To please God, what is higher than this? To have His smiles, to enjoy His friendship and fellowship. (2) The favour of men. "Approved of men." Christly goodness commands the involuntary homage of all consciences.

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

LAZARUS AND HIS SISTERS.

I.

If nature's loveliest scenes the heart delight
 Of him who gazeth, happy were those three
 Whose dwelling was in beauteous Bethany—
 Hard by the mount with olive blossoms white;
 If gold its fortunate owner's life makes bright,
 And most when used the clouds of poverty
 On others' skies to gild,—blest would they be
 Who wealth possessed, and it bestowed aright;
 If love makes home the fairest earthly place,
 Then were they glad above their kind, I wis,
 For each loved each full well; nor only this,
 They loved their Lord, the hope of Israel's race,
 And He loved them, and oft, oh rapturous bliss!
 Beside their hearth spake with them face to face.

II.

But suddenly across their threshold fell
 A dreadful shadow; stricken Lazarus lies
 Diseased, and the sisters' languid eyes
 Mirror the grief which is unspeakable,
 Albeit hope even yet their breasts doth swell.
 Unto a messenger they say, "Arise!
 "Haste to Bethabara, and our Lord apprise
 "That Lazarus, whom He loveth, fares not well."
 'Twas all they spake. Love needs no argument.
 Show to the faithful friend but that his aid
 Can succour, and, if not perforce delayed,
 Swift he proceeds, on mercy's mission bent;
 The news they sped, nor felt a whit dismayed
 Lest Christ should fail to heed their words' intent.

III.

But Jesus lingered : long and anxiously
The sisters watched ; and oft as smote the ear
The approaching tread of hurried footsteps near,
Hope in their desolate hearts takes root, and see !
Upon each cheek anon it doth appear
A blushing flower, whose bright maturity
Soon fades beneath the icy touch of fear
As past the expectant porch the glad sounds flee.
And now more weak waxed Lazarus, and even more,
Until his breath scarce heaved his fragile frame :
Yet Jesus tarried. Is His mercy o'er ?
Hath He no longer love for them, the same
As once He had ? And now their dead they bore
Unto the tomb ; nor even then He came.

IV.

See ! in their ruined home the sisters bend
Their fevered brows, and weep their losses twain,—
The brother whom they in the grave have lain,
The Saviour who exists no more as friend ;
The sadder sorrow this, for though Death rend
Twin human souls on earth, they yet again
May meet beyond the kingdom of Death's reign ;
But Christ-forsaken spirits naught can mend.
And so they mourned from weary day to day,
While most this direful thought their bosoms rent,—
That Jesus drew not near them to allay
The grief He drew not near them to prevent ;
When lo ! the cry, " He comes ;" and with Him they
Their listless steps to their dead brother bent.

V.

He wept, but not that Lazarus was dead,
And would englad his sisters' home no more,
Nor greet his Lord with loving words when, sore
Of foot from weary travel, Christ should tread
The threshold of their hospitable door,
To find a welcome meal, a welcome bed,

And for His further work be strengthenèd ;
For He to life the dead man would restore.
And well He knew who to a listening host
Proclaimed the parable, as they thronged Him round,
Of the lost sheep, and of the silver lost,
That blessings missed are prized the more when found ;
But He bemoaned, with tears, the fearful cost
Of sin, which in the tomb had Lazarus bound.

VI.

Beside that quiet tomb behold them stand !
The tearful trio and an eager crowd,
Who roll away the stone, as bid ; then, in a loud
And piercing voice, Christ utters the command—
“Lazarus, come forth !” And lo ! the dead man, hand
And foot with grave-clothes bound, obeyed, and stood
Erect amid that marvelling multitude,
Who free his fettered limbs. The scene how grand !
From spirit-hosts just summoned, he who views
Amazed the mortal throng which prying press
Around ; the exultant sisters, who caress
His vital form ; their radiant Lord ; the Jews,
Whose breasts the fiendish longing doth possess ;
To impart to Jesu's foes the wondrous news.

VII.

Thenceforth no need there was for Christ to tell,
If risen Lazarus chanced hard by to be,
Of those bright mansions where, anon, should dwell
All those who loved Him, as with frequency
He spake to men of yore, while wonderingly
They caught the gracious words which from Him fell ;
For Lazarus had those glories viewed, and he
Could speak their bliss, which doth all bliss excel.
Yes ! he had seen the shining Courts on high
Which Jesus, by the loving Father's grace
Impelled, forsook with joy, the human race
Fallen from God and good to upraise thereby ;
So Lazarus oft of Heaven would speak, while nigh
Christ silent heard, meek triumph in His face.

VIII.

Much cause those sisters had their Saviour's care
 To doubt, as lagged the tardy hours away,
 And from their sorrow still He chose to stay,
 Nor deigned their anguish to remove, or share;
 And yet, e'en 'mid the depth of their despair,
 His love burned for them with its wonted ray,
 And turned, at length, their sorrow's night to day
 Of gladdest lustre passing all compare.
 Thus is it still with our most gracious Lord;
 Though to our cry He sometimes callous seem,
 Yet feels He all our pangs; and, in the extreme
 Of our distress, His aid will oft afford:
 Who from the imprisoning tomb pent *Lasarus* freed,
 Hath pity and power to meet our every need.

THORNTON WELLS.

Note.—I am indebted to Dr. David Thomas, the author of "The Philosophy of Happiness" and numerous other works of profound and suggestive thought, for the argument of the 1st, 2nd, and 8th sonnets of the above series.—T. W.

PREACHER.—The accent of conviction is made up of a mixture of faith, power, and love combined, forming a characteristic which is at once simple, pious, and grand, redolent of inspiration and sanctity. It is the power, the magic of speech, the sacred fire, or what Mirabeau styles divinity in eloquence. It puts argument to silence, withdraws all attention from the preacher, and fixes it solely on what he says, or rather on what God says through him. It carries everything before it, because it comes from a heart that echoes the voice of God Himself. But take away the accent of conviction from the preacher, and divest his sermon of energetic faith, and what is left in it for his hearers? Mere sounding phrases and nothing more."—*Mullois*.

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

THE WINNOWER. ("WHAT is the CHAFF to the WHEAT? saith the Lord.")

The world wants a Winnower, and a Winnower it shall have. Never were the good things connected with the general life of England and its varied associations more mixed with chaff than now. Political Temporizings, Mercantile Trickeries, Priestly Assumptions, Social Sycophancies and Hollowness, Judicial Corruptions, Journalistic Venalities, Scientific Fallacies, Literary Sensualities abound on every hand, and not only enfeeble the instrumentalities that would be beneficial, but sicken all minds of true discernment and all hearts whose instincts are pure and honest. The True in all circles, neighbourhoods, parties, and Churches are sighing for some instrument that shall winnow the Literary, Social, Political and Religious Life of this country with the fan of Ethical Truth, and by the strong breezes of Analytic Research.

"THE WINNOWER" is being prepared, and will soon commence its work. Whatever books, records of public movements, speeches, or sermons are sent to the office shall be carefully sifted—the wheat preserved and the chaff borne away by the wind of just and kindly criticism.

All employed in this work must be thoroughly qualified for their arduous task—for arduous it will be;—They will be men as disgusted with all the *shams* and *unrealities* of modern English life as Thomas Carlyle, whose deep, strong longings are for some instrument with which to "fumigate the atmosphere." The writers will be selected from every department of our national life,—Politicians to sift Parliamentary measures, Scientists to sift scientific questions, Jurists to sift judicial procedures, Economists to sift mercantile transactions, Homiletic Critics to sift pulpit discourses, and Moral Reformers to sift even the so-called "Christian world." They will be men pledged to do their work in a spirit catholic and generous, abjuring all that is cynical, narrow, and sectarian.

"THE WINNOWER," whose mission and spirit, thus broadly indicated, will be a First-class Weekly Journal that shall chronicle as well as

criticize the leading agencies and events of the week, taking care to give special attention to the character and operations of our British Churches.

The Proprietors are determined that "The Winnower" shall be a Journal that no thoughtful minister or layman of any party or communion shall be ashamed to own or reluctant to welcome as their organ. By excluding from its columns all puerile tales, sensational anecdotes, morbid sentimentalities, fawning adulations of public men, tea-meeting twaddlings, or advertisements of questionable morality, it will have ample space for the record of those events and discussion of those topics which are vital to the interests of the community.

[We insert this, not merely because the projectors request us to do so, but because of our deep sense of the necessity of such a journal and strong desire to see it in triumphant action. As we understand that the projectors are determined to start with a certainty of success, they are anxious to obtain a large number of pledged subscribers for one year. Post free, 6s. 6d. We invite communications.

SERMONS BY THE LATE REV. W. H. BROOKFIELD. Edited by MRS. BROOKFIELD. With Biographical Notice by LORD LYTTELTON. London: Smith, Elder & Co., 15, Waterloo Place.

These are no ordinary sermons. They are the productions of a man of genius of enlarged culture and brimful of humour. The following letter which he wrote, when a curate at Maltby, to Lord Lyttelton, the author of his Biographical Notice, will give an insight into the humorous side of his mind. "Nothing changeth in this most lithic spot. The inventive spirit of a *Times* reporter would fall into lethargy in five minutes from the dearth and drought of notabilia. I have on the very coat you last saw me in; my hair and nails grow not; the fiddle is still unstrung. The only string it had when you saw it will not vary the monotony by cracking. The lean Calvinist is still lean and still a Calvinist. The very smoke hangs as it did over the chimneys, enchanted with sloth, refusing to modify itself into any new evolutions; the birds hop not, the fishes flop not, the kine crop not, and for me, my mind is the callous unresisting victim of a painless but fatal chronic, and my wits lie all five huddled and stifled in a leathern elephantiasis of sloth, ineapable and inaccessible."

A communication which Miss Thackeray forwarded to the noble author of the Memoir is also very interesting, inasmuch as it reveals the judgment of her illustrious father, as to the character and merits of the preacher. "It is," says Miss Thackeray, "a great many years now since we saw Mr. Brookfield for the first time. He was standing in a white surplice, reading the psalms to the precipitate chant of the choristers in some old London church. It made a great impression on us at the time, for we had been used only to the French Protestant service. I can almost hear the voice through all these years. It was

very clear and mellow, and the words had a certain deliberate measure, which I think is peculiar to many of the Cambridge men of that time; cultivated, melancholy, the notes are very distinctive. One of my father's best-known essays is called the 'Curate's Walk.' It was published in *Punch*, at a time when Frank Whitestock and his friend were still comparatively young men. Perhaps people do not know that Frank Whitestock's name was William Brookfield. He was a curate then in St. James's, and living in Great Pulteney Street. My father, telling us once about this essay, said that he had never seen any one enter more kindly and excellently into such work. Mr. Brookfield seemed to understand his poor people with admirable instinct, and to know how to speak to them, to deal with their wants, and how to meet them on their own ground. Many persons do not remember the description of the journeyman shoemaker and his family in the "Curate's Walk." Their story was the old one. The man had been in work and had the fever. The clothes had been pawned, the furniture and the bedstead had been sold, and they slept on the mattress; the mattress went, and they slept on the floor; the tools went, and the end of all things seemed at hand, when the gracious apparition of the Curate with his umbrella came and cheered those stricken-down poor folks. The journeyman shoemaker must have been astonished at such a sight. He is not or was not a church-goer. He is a man of advanced opinions, believing that priests are hypocrites, and that clergymen in general drive about in coaches and four, and eat a tithe pig a day. This proud priest got Mr. Crispin a bed to lie upon and some soup to eat; and (being the treasurer of certain good folks of his parish, whose charities he administers) as soon as the man was strong enough to work, the curate lent him money wherewith to redeem his tools, and which our friend is paying back by instalments at this day. And any man who has seen these two honest men talking together would have said the shoemaker was the haughtier of the two.

"I remember myself once walking over a stubble field at Somerby with Mr. Brookfield, and hearing him talk about his parishioners there. He was ill even then, and bearing much pain and languor with courage, patience, and reserve, though I did not know it at the time. 'How can I preach to him? What is there for him to deny himself?' he said as an old man staggered past with some great load upon his head. 'He gets up at four in the morning, he works all day long in the field, through all weathers and wind; he crawls home at night, stupified with fatigue and crippled with rheumatism, to fling himself down to sleep; he never complains; he dines contentedly off dry bread and a bit of bacon perhaps on Sundays. He has had nothing better for years; he will never have anything else to expect. He is honest, patient, industrious, self-denying. It is he who preaches the sermon, not I.'"

The Memoir is a deeply interesting one. The volume contains twenty-six sermons, and they are no ordinary productions. Though in the conventional sense they are anti-evangelical, in the Gospel sense they are evangelical in the highest degree. They abound with quickening

truths and striking illustrations. Our readers will be able to judge of their character by the one that we republish in our Leading Homily this month,

THE CLERGYMAN'S MAGAZINE. Conducted by Members of the Church Homiletical Society. Vol. I. Part I. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 27, Paternoster Row.

Our readers will bear us witness that we have always welcomed with a kind word every serial that has appeared of a homiletic character; and certainly a large number have appeared from time to time since the advent of the *Homilist*. If the *Homilist* has done nothing more, it certainly has had the power of calling up competitors, if not opponents. Many of them have had their day and passed away. Where is the *Evangelical Pulpit*, that came soon after us into the field; and whose avowed object it was, to correct our errors and to silence our voice? Long since gone. Where is the *Congregational Pulpit*, that rose up for the same purpose, and had for its contributors, what, in the cant and arrogance of a clique, were called "the leading preachers of the denomination?" It gave up the ghost, and has sunk into oblivion long ago. Where is the *Pulpit Analyst*, which stated in almost its first number that the *Homilist* had done its work, had worn itself out, and that it had come to drive it from the field and take its place? Though it had more strength than any of them, it too has gone to the grave with its predecessors; and since its demise some 80,000 fresh volumes of the *Homilist* have appeared, and nearly all have been sold. Where is the *Preacher's Lantern*, that was kindled by the expiring fires of the *Analyst*? It flickered a few months and then went out, and left the world as bright as ever. Here comes another from the same publishing house; and if this number is a fair specimen, it is impossible for it to live, unless the object of sermons is to act the part of mental chloral and make the pulpit more somnific than ever. The Editor's address is one of the most pointless things one can read. The first discourse is by a bishop, and characteristically dull. It has not a single original thought, nor one ray of genius. Two short articles from the pen of Rev. Prebendary Griffith are about the only things in it worth reading. The Magazine contains several pages of extracts, nearly all of which may be found in "Dickenson's Illustrations," or "Bates' Encyclopedia of Anecdotes." If the Church Homiletical Society can produce nothing better than this, it will not do much toward improving the pulpit of the age. One thing we can say in its favour, and that is, it does not try to imitate the *Homilist*, as several have done. On the principle that men recoil instinctively from those animals that are most like themselves, we have often felt a disgust for homiletic productions that have been fashioned entirely after the model of the *Homilist*. A volume of such was sent to us the other day: the type, headings of the articles, distribution of the subjects, phraseology, were so like the *Homilist* that we looked at it as we should at a gorilla, too much like ourselves to be entertained.

THE YEAR OF SALVATION: WORDS OF LIFE FOR EVERY DAY. By J. VAN OOSTERZEE, D.D. JUNE TO DECEMBER. Translated by C. SPENCE. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 88, George Street.

The author of this excellent work is by this time well known to our readers. His productions are always enlightened, spirited, vigorous, and devout. An extract from the Preface will reveal to our readers the nature and purpose of this book. "Every portion of it, as far as possible, is complete in itself; every needless digression, nay, every superfluous sentence, having been rigidly suppressed. Why be silent on what I have no desire to conceal? Not unfrequently may be found here compressed into two pages, that which in a more extended form has been employed as a pulpit discourse. A large provision of unpublished sermons have been used by me for this purpose; and often the task of compression has cost considerable labour before it could be made to assume its present form. Perhaps the book, well employed, may not be found of inconsiderable service as a chapter of practical theology, and after my decease may be regarded as a sort of legacy of practical homilies. It will, at least, be apparent that I regard the office of a preacher with far greater seriousness, and make for myself, as such, far higher demands than in the present day is done by many. Much of what is here expressed in such a modest form has been in former years urged with vehemence, and then not easily rejected. Late, however, but times change, and we with them. Many of those to whom my words and writings were, through the grace of God, at one time of significance, have now gone hence; others who still know and comprehend me will perhaps in these sheets appreciate the evidence of personal faith and spiritual experience in which we are united, whatever else may faint and fail. A portion of myself, of the best that I can give, I have expressed in these pages; and in so far I have myself found in these meditations inward refreshing in many a weary and solitary hour. May it prepare a similar invigoration to my companions in the path and in the contest, both on this side of the ocean and on the other, in whose hearts and households those words of life have found a willing entrance, which shall ever be to me yet more and more the material for humble gladness in Him who has strengthened me for this work in the service of His Church."

We heartily recommend this book, as one of the very best of its kind that has appeared.

THE EVERLASTING SIGN; OR, CHRISTIANITY ITS OWN WITNESS. By WILLIAM HUDSON. London: Longmans, Green & Co.

This book contains seven discourses, the subjects of which are, The Everlasting Sign, The Saviour of the Gospel, Decision, The Divine Ideal of the Church, True Christian Discipleship, Christian Worship, A Pure Life in an Impure World.

We give the Preface, as explaining the author's idea in this work.

"The second of these discourses was delivered in substance at Horn Castle in May last, in connection with an annual meeting of Christian Ministers who honoured me with a unanimous request for its publication. The rest have been delivered in the ordinary course of my public ministrations, and appear in their present form as a memorial of services in which some persons profess to have found interest and profit. But another design has also been kept in mind, as the title of the book will show; and the volume is given to the public under the conviction that it deals after its manner with a subject of great present importance. The thorough investigation of this subject is most desirable, and this little book may be a slight contribution towards that end. The Christian life is among us, appealing to every one who observes and thinks. What is its origin, and what great lesson is its presence designed to teach? This two-fold question the following pages are meant to answer in some fair degree. How the argument has been conducted, and what amount of value is to be attributed to it, as here presented, I leave the reader to consider and determine for himself."

There is much in these discourses stimulating at once to the thinking and the devotional elements of human nature. Many passages will be found marked by vigour and eloquence.

THE PASTORAL CARE. By SAMUEL MAC AILL. London: Hodder & Stoughton, Paternoster Row.

The intention of the author of this work is undoubtedly good, and many of his remarks are characterized by practical wisdom. But, ah me! the young preachers who require such minute directions as to how they should act in their various departments of duty, must be so destitute of true genius and pastoral aptitudes that they should give themselves to manual and mechanical work rather than to the work of inspiring souls to the right and the true. They must be dolts indeed, to require much of the advice contained in this little volume.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE TEN DAYS' CONVENTION FOR THE PROMOTION OF SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS HELD AT BRIGHTON. London: F. E. Longley, 39, Warwick Lane.

We have no doubt that all the people who enter into this revival kind of work are well-meaning and heartily desire to be good and do good. But we are bound to confess that the amount of egotism which almost every speaker displays, the theological crudities that he utters, and the sensation which he seeks to produce, are opposed alike to our moral tastes and to our convictions as to the sublime ideas and lofty purposes of spiritual Christianity.



A HOMILY

ON

*Lessons Suggested by our Lord's First Purification of the Temple.**

SCHLEIERMACHER X.

IF Christ had appeared as a *Teacher merely*, even this would have been a great benefit; and the truth, once scattered abroad in the hearts of men, would never have perished; but it would hardly in this way have become an affair of the whole human race and have acquired this extensive influence over it.

Where anything great is to be effected, there word and deed, teaching and labour, must meet together; and so also with Christ, the teaching is only one-half of His occupation, the other half is the establishment of a community of love and reverence towards God, of a new mind, of a holy spirit.

Therefore it was necessary that He should appear, in regard to the existing institutions of religion, and in

* John ii. 13-17.

regard to what was essential in the old still-existent constitution, as a Reformer; and it is important for us to learn from an example, upon what principles He acted in this capacity.

This was the first time, since our Saviour had publicly appeared as Teacher, that He had entered the sacred precincts of the Temple.

The Temple was the outward centre of all religious life; all pious hopes and notions clustered around it; and from it proceeded all arrangements which held the people together among themselves, and separated them from the rest of the world. Here it was necessary that the work of improvement should begin, and the foundation be laid of the new spiritual edifice which Christ had come into the world to erect.

Let us from that account learn the *principles by which our Lord was actuated in the improvement of all that had reference to the religious associations of men.*

I. In the first place we perceive, that in this case also our Lord shows that *He came not to dissolve and to destroy, but, connecting Himself with what was given, to improve and to complete.*

In accordance with the opposite self-revealing tendency, which even in our time is in many other respects well-meaning, it might be asked, Why did the Redeemer expose Himself to such trouble and danger for the improvement of an institution, the downfall of which He had Himself so truly prophesied? (John iv. 21.)

But yet we see everywhere, that He was not willing to erect the new upon the ruins of the old, but, so much as in Him lay, the former should connect itself in a mild and gentle way with the latter, in order to improve it.

This bias of genuine godlike wisdom, this equally pacific and victorious power of Christ we too are required to make our own. Never can destruction be the specific

aim, the conscious and deliberate act, of the thoroughly spiritual man, but only maintenance and reformation with a view to greater perfectness.

What is incapable of improvement will fall; but let this happen, not by the deed of violence and injustice, let it be the result of its inward inevitable destiny.

II. *The zeal of the Saviour in the purification of the Temple was directed to this end—that out of those precincts which were devoted to pious meditation, out of that quiet retreat which was set apart, in the midst of the busy world, for the fashioning of the inner life, everything should be banished which might entangle and draw men down again into the thoughts and anxieties of common life.*

Not frivolous-minded, nay, even truly just and candid persons might have thought that such-like outward things were nothing injurious, and could present no hindrance to the true directing of the mind toward God. The Temple was surely large enough; all those business people were surely ministering to the commerce of the religious life. Was it not a matter of indifference whether they were within or in the neighbourhood of the Temple? Those who allowed their devout feelings to be disturbed by them, could in any case only be such from whom it would simply never be possible to remove all occasions of disturbance, and so forth.

But human prudence is one thing, Christ's insight, which here must have shown itself the true one, another.

Whatever is designed to bring men together into the presence of the Most High, and to sustain and strengthen them in their intercourse with God, let it be kept pure, and not be desecrated.

The weakness of the human heart forbids the outward and the inward, the worldly and the Divine, to be thus indiscriminately mingled, and makes even the outward separation of the two domains to be necessary.

The germ of corruption in the Jewish nation was precisely that mixing up of the holy and earthly, the ecclesiastical and the civil; hence that readiness to be satisfied in religion and morality with the empty word and outward custom.

Because Christ saw this, He considered what He now did to be so necessary, that He repeated it later on.

Therefore let us also keep our ecclesiastical society, which the same temple-purifying Lord has instituted, free from all admixture with foreign and discordant elements.

III. Thirdly, it might be asked, *with what right the Saviour acted in this way.* Did He not overstep the limits of His authority, and meddle with the concerns of the priests and rulers?

No. It was a part of the free customs of that age and nation, that any person could attack and remove whatever ran counter to the public right. At that time honest zeal had its rights and room to work in.

Where no public action is allowed, but what is apportioned to outward offices, there that too-narrow spirit abounds which is idle and negligent in that which is good, when there is no direct demand for it in the outward calling, or in connection with which each is ever leaning upon his neighbour.

The spirit of the Redeemer, in which He was far from all slothfulness towards the good and from every cowardly sentiment, is to pass over into the mind and life of every Christian.

Zealous speech accompanied His deeds from the commencement and aroused the bystanders, so that the work of cleansing which He had begun was carried to completion. Thus also we are to lift up our voices for the right and good, that we may win public opinion for it; the scourges that terrify in the present day are fear and shame.

We Christians are the nation of priests, who are called to keep the great temple pure—the spiritual temple of the Godhead upon earth.

W. E. COLLIER.

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Psalms.

Our Purpose.—Many learned and devout men have gone philologically through this *TANNAKIM*, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal *hermeneutics* of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough *homiletic* treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

Our Method.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1) The *HISTORY* of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2) *ANNOTATIONS* of the passage. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase, or allusion that may occur.—(3) The *ASSESSMENT* of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is amongst the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4) The *HOMILETICS* of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavour so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately deduced, as to suggest such thoughts, and indicate such sermonizing methods, as may promote the proficiency of modern pulpit ministrations.

Subject: The mere Formalist and the Spiritualist in Religion.

“But unto the wicked God saith,” etc.—*PSALM* I. 16-23.

HISTORY.—See page 139.

ANNOTATIONS: Ver. 16.—“*But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare My statutes, or that thou shouldest take My covenant in thy mouth!*” The words “statutes” and “covenant” express the same thing, viz., the law of God.

Ver. 17.—“*Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest My words behind thee.*” The words of Paul, Rom. ii. 21-23, are a commentary on this.

Ver. 18, 19, 20.—“*When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son.*” Here is a terrible indictment, a long catalogue of charges. *Dishonesty*: “consentedst

with" thieves, sympathizing with and acquiescing in their conduct. *Adultery*: "hast been partaker with adulterers." A vice, this, common amongst the Jewish people. *Falschhood*: "Givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit." Their tongues were employed in devising and executing purposes of fraud and falsehood. *Slander*: "Thou speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son." All these crimes they had perpetrated whilst attending at the same time to the duties of a mere ceremonial religion.

Ver. 21.—"*These things hast thou done, and I kept silence.*" That is, I have held my peace; I have not interfered to check thy freedom, or to punish thy sins. "*Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.*" This is a very common and a very grievous moral mistake—men judging God by themselves. "*But I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.*" That is, I will array thy sins before thine eyes. I will so spread them out before thee that thou shalt see them distinctly and impressively.

Ver. 22.—"*Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.*" "Oh, consider this, ye forgetters of God, lest I rend, and there be no deliverer."—*Alexander*.

Ver. 23.—"*Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God.*" This means the same as verses 14 and 15.

ANALYSIS.—This begins the second part of the same subject as that contained in the former verses. In those verses is shown that mere outward form cannot obtain acceptance with God, but that the religion of the heart is the one essential thing. Here it is shown that wicked men cannot be approved of by God, however strict and regular in their religious observances.

HOMILETICS.—Homiletically, the verses bring under our notice two classes of religious men: the mere formalists and the true spiritualists.

I. THE MERE FORMALISTS in religion. Concerning these, several things are suggested.

First: They are *religiously active*. "What hast thou to do to declare My statutes?" etc. Mere formalists are often very busy in preaching and praying. As a rule, perhaps, the good thing that man most lacks he will speak most about; the man who loves least will talk most about love; the man with the least principle will be the most active in advocating it, and the man with the least religion in spirit will talk most about it. The less heart in religion, generally the more hand; the less vitality, the more voice. No hand was so busy at the

table of the Last Supper as that of Judas. "The hand of him who betrayeth Me is on the table."

Secondly: They are *morally wicked*. "Unto the wicked God saith." Under all their religious services there was the spirit of wickedness. (1) They had no desire for knowledge. "Thou hatest instruction." (2) They had no reverence for God's word. "Thou castest My words behind thee." There was an inward contempt for that which they taught. (3) They had no practical regard for the rights of society. They had the spirit of dishonesty, falsehood, adultery, and slander. The wickedest men that have ever lived have often been the most religious in a ritualistic and formal sense. Religious formality crucified the Son of God Himself. Religious form without the genuine spirit, is worse than clouds without water. It is law without justice—a tyranny; language without truth—a deception; an atmosphere without oxygen—a poison.

Thirdly: They are *God-degrading*. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." They bring the Infinite down to their own level; they invest Him with their own passions, infirmities, and even vices. The God of the formalist is fashioned after his own character.

Fourthly: They are *Divinely threatened*. Threatened (1) With a terrible conviction of their own guilt. "I will reprove thee and set them in order before thine eyes." What calamity can be greater, than for a sinner to have all his sins, in all their awful enormity, brought before the eye of his conscience; instead of being separated from him as far as the east is from the west, brought into contact with all the tenderest and profoundest sensibilities of his moral being? (2) With an irremediable destruction. "Consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." The language here is derived from a ravenous beast, tearing its victim limb from limb. "None to deliver." "I called, and ye refused; I stretched out my hand, and no man regarded it," etc.

II. THE TRUE SPIRITUALISTS in religion. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me: and to him that ordereth his conversa-

tion aright will I show the salvation of God." Who is the truly spiritual man?

First: He is one that *worships God acceptably*. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me." The sentiments of gratitude, reverence, adoration, that rise out of his regenerated heart are the praise that is well-pleasing to God. These, and not the bended knees, not the costly sacrifices, not the loud hymn, constitute religion.

Secondly: He is one that *lives an upright life*. "Him that ordereth his conversation aright." He is a man that walks in all the commandments of the Lord, blameless.

Thirdly: He is one who *secures the true salvation*. "Will I show the salvation of God." Salvation from all ignorance, error, selfishness, sin, and sorrow.

CONCLUSION.—Such are a few homiletical thoughts suggested by this psalm, the general ideas of which, says a modern author, are " (1) That there is to be a solemn judgment of mankind; (2) That the issues of that judgment will not be determined by the observance of the external forms of religion; (3) That God will judge men impartially for their sins, though they observe those forms of religion; and (4) That no worship of God can be acceptable which does not spring from the heart."

LIFE A RELIGION.—"How different is the aspect, in action at least, of those grand conceptions which we term Christianity,—its vast establishments, countless teachers, and multitudinous professors,—as contrasted with the period when twelve poor men, with their great Leader, essayed to plant new standards of spiritual truth before the world. Then Christianity sought, now it claims, a hearing. Religion, however, should be acted as well as spoken. Incredible, almost, considering the immensity of the means, seems too often the paucity of results. But the Church which is to consummate religion's precious work, ruling by love, not law merely, must be unfettered by formula or creed. Yes, a mighty purpose, a united faith, shall one day address themselves to the elevation of the down-trodden, the reclamation of the vicious and incompetent, the inculcation of rectitude and truth, and the beauty of charity on all."—*Dr. M'Cormac.*

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Job.

The Book of Job is one of the grandest sections of Divine Scripture. It has never yet, to our knowledge, been treated in a purely Homiletic method for Homiletic ends. Besides many learned expositions on the book found in our general commentaries, we have special exegetical volumes of good scholarly and critical worth; such as Drs. Barnes, Wemyss, Mason Goode, Noyes Lee, Delitzsch, and Herman Hedwick Bernard: the last is in every way a masterly production. For us, therefore, to go into philology and verbal criticism, when such admirable works are available to all students, would be superfluous, if not presumption. Ambiguous terms, when they occur, we shall of course explain, and occasionally suggest an improved rendering; but our work will be chiefly, if not entirely, Homiletic. We shall essay to bring out from the grand old words those Divine verities which are true and vital to man as man in all lands and ages. These truths we shall frame in an order as philosophic and suggestive as our best powers will enable us to do; and this in order to help the earnest preachers of God's Holy Word.

Subject: Righteous Sarcasm.

"But Job answered and said," etc.—Job xxvi. 1-4.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS: Ver. 1.—"*But Job answered and said.*" "In this chapter Job commences a reply to all that had been said by his three friends, and concludes the controversy. At the close of this chapter it would seem probable that he paused for Zophar, whose turn came next to speak; but as he said nothing, he resumed his discourse, and continues it to the close of chap. xxxi." "Whenever," says Dr. Bernard, "any one of Job's friends had thought it necessary to remind him of the Omnipotence and Omnipresence of God, the unfortunate man not only immediately takes up these subjects himself, but generally dwells upon them at much greater length than his friend had done, with a view, probably, to make him feel the impropriety of preaching that to him which he himself, as was well known, had been in the habit of preaching to others during the whole of his life. This custom of his we shall see him follow in the discourse he is about to deliver. Bildad had in his last speech brought forward no argument whatever, contenting himself with setting forth in a few words the unlimited power and profound wisdom of the Almighty: this is felt by Job very keenly, and is looked upon by him as a real insult. He therefore replies."

Ver. 2.—"*How hast thou helped him that is without power? how savest thou the arm that hath no strength?*" The patriarch here seems to mock Bildad in having said here nothing but what was universally known. He means to say, What assistance hast thou given to him that has no strength, what help hast thou given to the arm that has no might?

Ver. 3.—“*How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom?*” “As he had undertaken to give counsel to another, and to suggest views that might be adapted to elevate his mind in his depression, and to console him in his sorrows, he had a right to expect more than he had found in his speech.” “*And how hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?*” Plentifully means abundantly. The meaning is, What a multitude of words thou hast employed to tell me what I know! Thou hast said nothing new, nothing to meet the difficulties of the case.

Ver. 4.—“*To whom hast thou uttered words?*” “The sense is, Do you attempt to teach me in such a manner on such a subject? Do you take it that I am ignorant of the perfections of God, that such remarks about Him would convey any real instruction?” “*And whose spirit came from thee?*” By whose spirit didst thou speak? Dost thou imagine that there is inspiration in thy words? Thy utterance is common-place, nothing more. Have not I myself proclaimed the boundless wisdom of God?

HOMILETICS.—These words suggest the subject of righteous sarcasm. All expositors of this passage discover irony strong and sharp in these words. In other places of the Divine word than this, irony is discovered; even Christ Himself seemed to deal in sarcasm. When is sarcasm *righteous*? Not when it is used *haughtily*. It often seems to be the very breath of a haughty spirit. Satire sits ever on the lip of the arrogant. Not when it is used by *revenge*. The man who uses it as a man would a pistol or a sword, to wreak vengeance on an offender, uses it *unrighteously*: for revenge is a bad passion. “Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.” Not when it is used by *irreverence*. Irony is the favourite style of speech with the impious and the profane. They sit in the “seat of the scorner;” they sneer at the holy and the good. Not when it is used by *ill-nature*. There are some whose natures seem to be malign, and their speech is a snarl. There are journals whose inspiration is ill-nature, and whose speech is satire. When, then, is it righteous?

I. When it is used to CHASTISE THE WRONG. Thus Job used it now. Bildad and his other friends had done him a wrong in charging him with sentiments which he never held, and in speaking to him in a spirit of antagonism rather than of friendship; and he chastises them, not with a physical instrument,

but with satiric speech. Man is justified in chastising wrong, and sarcasm is one of the best instruments for the purpose. It is often the most painful. It penetrates where no bullet, spear, or sword can reach. It cuts into the soul, it lacerates the heart, it often makes conscience writhe. Because it is the most painful, it is frequently the most effective. Satire will often strike a man down where physical violence will only rouse him into bold defiance. A poet has represented a satirist as saying,—

“ I'm one whose whip of steel can with a lash
Imprint the characters of shame so deep,
Even in the brazen forehead of proud sin,
That not eternity shall wear it out.”

It is righteous,—

II. When it is used as a CORRECTIVE OF ERROR. There are errors which can stand before the strongest arguments, but will reel and writhe at the breath of sarcasm. What errors in social life, such as snobbery and lacqueyism, have not been grievously wounded, and in some cases crucified, by the manly and mighty sarcasm of such men as Thackeray and Carlyle? And many Puritanic crudities, sickly sentimentalities, and narrow bigotries withered before the breath of South's ironic discourses. It is righteous,—

III. When it is used as a SHIELD OF DEFENCE. Self-defence is often justifiable where physical force is unjustifiable; and where the most powerful arguments and appeals are ineffective, a stroke of sarcasm will do the work and make the coward crouch at your foot.

Sermonic Glances at the Gospel of St. John.

As our purpose in the treatment of this Gospel is purely the development, in the briefest and most suggestive form, of Sermonic outlines, we must refer our readers to the following works for all critical inquiries into the author and authorship of the book, and also for any minute criticisms on difficult clauses. The works we shall especially consult are—"Introduction to New Testament," by Bleek; "Commentary on John," by Tholuck; "Commentary on John," by Hengstenberg; "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels," by Westcott; "The Gospel History," by Ebrard; "Our Lord's Divinity," by Liddon; "St. John's Gospel," by Oosterzee; "Doctrine of the Person of Christ," by Dorner; Lange; etc., etc.

Subject: Christ's Superhuman Claim.

"The Pharisees therefore said unto Him, Thou bearest record of Thyself; Thy record is not true. Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am One that bear witness of Myself, and the Father that sent Me beareth witness of Me. Then said they unto Him, Where is Thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know Me, nor My Father: if ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also."—JOHN viii. 13-19.

EXPOSITION: VER. 13.—"*The Pharisees therefore said unto Him, Thou bearest record of Thyself; Thy record is not true.*" In Deut. xvii. 6, we have this Jewish law. "At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death." This law did not mean that what one man said was necessarily untrue because not confirmed by other men, for truth is independent of witnesses. Nor does it mean that a statement is necessarily true because a number of men will affirm it; for in corrupt society it is not difficult to get almost any number of men, on certain conditions, to swear to a falsehood. This has been done over and over again in human history, and is being done the world over this very day. The intention of this law seemed

to be to guard human life from the stroke of a hasty vengeance. The Pharisees, however, seem to refer to this law as a reason for rejecting what Christ had asserted concerning Himself being the "light of the world." They do not say that His evidence is insufficient because it is unsupported by a second party, but that it is not true.

Ver. 14.—"*Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true.*" This seems to contradict what our Saviour said in chapter v. 31. "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true." He does not mean there, not true in itself; but, not true in your judgment, according to your law. Here He asserts broadly, that though He had no witness, yet His record was true. What He said was true, though the world itself denied it. He knew it to be true. "*I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.*" "Light," says Augustine, "both shows itself and other things. Light affords witness to itself. It opens sound eyes and is its own evidence." Then also, only he who knows can witness, and Jesus alone knew this. He, as it were, said, I know perfectly My origin, My mission, and My plans, and no human evidence could be free from any possibility of error, or have such absolute certainty as Mine. "*But ye cannot tell.*" His origin in God and His return to God were divine actions which surpassed all human knowledge and could not be reached except through Divine revelation, which they would not receive.

Ver. 15.—"*Ye judge after the flesh.*" They judged from appearances, a most deceptive rule of judgment this, for things are not what they seem. All their notions of worth, happiness, honour, success, were carnal. "*I judge no man.*" i.e., I judge no man as you judge man. He came, not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He had not even condemned the adulteress to death, but preached to her repentance, forgiveness, salvation.

Ver. 16.—"*And yet if I judge, My judgment is true.*" "*Yet if I judge,*" καὶ ἐὰν κριτῶ δὲ Ἐγὼ. The "I" is emphatic. "*For I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me.*" He felt Himself so personally associated, so essentially One with His Father, that His acts as well as His testimonies had the highest confirmation.

Ver. 17.—"*It is also written in your law.*" He now puts the case home to them on their own principles, that the law requires a double witness. Deut. xvii. 6, xix. 15. The emphasis is upon *your*—the law which they had made so completely their own, and in which they boasted, "*That the testimony of two men is true.*" It was in the mouth of two or three witnesses that every word should be established. This allowed of two as enough. He claims that He has two.

Ver. 18.—"*I am One that bear witness of Myself, and the Father that sent Me beareth witness of Me.*" As if He had said, According to your law, which requires a second witness, you should believe Me, for My Father is My witness.

Ver. 19.—“*Then said they unto Him, Where is Thy Father!*” This question was evidently put in derision, spoken in the same spirit as Pilate exclaimed, “What is truth?” You have no Father but an earthly one like ourselves, if so, where is He? “*Jesus answered, Ye neither know Me, nor My Father: If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also.*” The same spiritual light and darkness would suffice to reveal to the mind or to hide from it at once the Father and the Son, the Sender and the Sent.

HOMILETICS.—The subject of these words is *Christ's super-human claim*. That claim is stated in the preceding verse which we have already discussed, it is the claim of being the *Light of the world*. Here we have this claim,—

I. DENIED BY THE PHARISEES. “The Pharisees therefore said unto Him, Thou bearest record of Thyself: Thy record is not true.” We make two remarks upon their denial,—

First: It was, from their view of Him, somewhat *natural*. Though it must be admitted that they had plenty of evidence to convince them that He was any how superhuman, they regarded Him only as a man, and therefore such words as, “I am the Light of the world,” falling from the lips of a mere man, would strike them as an arrogant and impious falsehood. Imagine the wisest and the best man that ever lived coming to you and uttering such words, how would you feel, and what would you say? Would you not be likely to regard him either as a brainless fanatic or as an impious impostor? You would repudiate his utterance and recoil from his presence. These Pharisees therefore, regarding Him as they did, as a mere man, we wonder not at their statement, “Thy record is not true.” Another remark we make concerning their denial is,—

Secondly: That the reason for it was somewhat *absurd*. What was the reason? It lacked the corroboration of another witness. “Thou bearest record of Thyself.” We cannot accept this mere self-assertion: thy single testimony on such a subject as this we cannot accept. We do not suppose for a moment that if all the disciples and a thousand more had stood by Christ and asserted the truth of His utterance, they would have accepted it. No number of men can make a

truth more true, or turn a falsehood into truth; and hence their reason is absurd. The fact was, that their unbelief in Christ was a thing of the heart, and they were ready to formulate some reason to justify its existence. So it has ever been, and so it is now. The reasons men assign for their infidelity are not the cause of their unbelief; the cause is deeper down in their nature, down in the region of prejudices, prepossessions, likings and dislikings. Here we have this claim,—

II. VINDICATED BY CHRIST. In His vindication He states four things,—

First: *That His assertion was true, independent of any witness.* "Jesus answered and said unto them. Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true: for I know whence I came and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come and whither I go." That He was the "Light of the world" was not with Him an ambitious dream, or an idea that had come to Him from the testimony of others; it was with Him an absolute fact of *personal consciousness*. "For I know whence I came." As men know that they have minds because they think, feel, and resolve, Christ knew that He was the "Light of the world." It was true independent of all testimony for or against. He was conscious of it. "Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true."

For His vindication He states,—

Secondly: *That their judgment on the question was carnal, His was true.* "Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, My judgment is true." The judging of the Pharisees was without significance or weight, for it was by appearances; and appearances are ever deceptive. They judged Christ by His mere bodily aspect and mien, a poor, wan, dejected man; and therefore His declaration that He was the "Light of the world" would appear incredible to the last degree. He that judgeth by appearances, in a world like this, will generally judge wrongly. Thus Christ judged not. His eyes penetrated through all appearances and phenomena, clearly discerned and estimated those everlasting principles

that inspire the heart of the Absolute One, and that move and manage the universe. In His vindication He states,—

Thirdly: *That whilst His assertion was true, independent of any witness, it was nevertheless backed by the testimony of the Eternal Father.* “It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of Myself, and the Father that sent Me beareth witness of Me.” Jesus had up to this point vindicated the validity of His own testimony. Here He asserts that His testimony was affirmed by the Highest Being—the Father. In his words here we have a conclusion *a minori ad majus*; “If, according to your law, the testimony of two men who may be deceived is sufficient, how much more the testimony of two witnesses who are highly exalted above all suspicion of error or deception.” God’s testimony in favour of Christ’s teaching goes on through the ages, comes out in nature, in science, in human history and consciousness. In His vindication He states,—

Fourthly: *That they were in utter ignorance both of His Father and Himself.* “Their question seemed to indicate that His Father was something utopian, that His conceit of being God’s Son was an idle fantasy, without any reality. Christ intimates to them that they, by the wicked position which they assumed towards Him, closed against themselves the way to the knowledge of His Father. Whosoever places himself in opposition to Christ can never know the Christian and only true God, the Father of Jesus Christ; for Christ is the bridge to that God whom not to know is to be without life and without salvation. In reference to the manner of the Jews’ coming, Quesnel remarks ‘All may desire and seek the knowledge of God and His mysteries in humble and sincere prayer, or with a mind full of evil design and unbelief, as we see here, and among the learned of this world.’”—*Hengstenberg.*

Germs of Thought.

Subject: The Drama of Life.

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children."—Eph. v. 1.

THE word *mimētai*, which is here translated *followers*, signifies such as *personate others*. This is done by one person assuming the gait, mode of speech, accent, carriage, and the general peculiarities of another whom he desires to *represent*. It is from this Greek word that our English word *mimic* is derived. Though this term is often used in a ludicrous sense, yet here it is employed in a very solemn and *substantial* sense. The plain import of the sentence seems to be this,—“Let your whole conduct be like that of your Lord.” *Imitate* Him, in all your words, actions, spirit, and inclinations. Copy Him as children do their parents. For *that* is your relation to Him. If ye, therefore, be children of God, show this love to your heavenly Father, and *imitate* all His moral perfections. Acquire the mind that was in Jesus. His language is, “Verily, verily, I say unto you. The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth,—*these also doeth the Son*.” Even *His* mediatorial life was one of sublime *imitation*. All the perfections of Deity were fully represented by Him. We learn from the figure employed in the text, that the Apostle in this place viewed the Christian life under a *dramatic aspect*. There are several thoughts suggested.

I. CHRISTIAN LIFE ON EARTH IS REPRESENTED AS A MORAL DRAMA.

By a *drama* ordinarily is meant, a poem, or literary composition, representing human life, and accommodated to *action*. The character or characters involved in it may be represented by *actors*. In its nature, the drama may be either tragedy or comedy, or some variation of these. It may be either fictitious or real. It may also be made to include every species of repre-

sentation by action that man is capable of performing. It is in this broad and comprehensive sense that we use the term *drama* here. Hence, it may be a representation of the physical or the moral, of the human or of the Divine life.

First : *The representative element enters into all human life.*

Life itself cannot be seen by us in its essential nature, we can judge of it only by its visible manifestations. We form our opinions of the essential by the phenomenal. All the outward activities of man are but *interpretations*, more or less accurate, of the inward operations of the soul. The *body*, in every look, attitude, gesture, and grimace, in a certain sense *personates the spirit*. We can take no cognizance of the sublimest realities of existence, only as they are manifested to us through appropriate *media*. We can know nothing of thought, only as it is expressed in *words*; of motive, only as it is displayed in *action*; of principle, only as it is developed in *character*. The visible is a *personation* of the invisible. Every look, every word, and every act, are in a certain sense *dramatic*. All men are actors, whether they will it or not. The representative element enters into their whole life, and makes it sublime or ridiculous, God-like or fiend-like.

Secondly : *The imitative element enters into all human life.*

Man is emphatically an imitative creature. His whole life is moulded and fashioned on this principle. There is no absolute originality in him. He cannot create something out of nothing. All that he has, he has borrowed from others. Past ages, each and all, have contributed their portion to make him what he is. He is ignorant or intelligent, selfish or generous, cruel or humane, impious or godly, according as he has treated the facilities vouchsafed to him by a benevolent Providence for his improvement. Before him are presented good and evil, both in precept and in example. It is left for him to choose between them, to decide according to which *model* he will form his character. The command in the text, *Be ye therefore imitators of God*, as dear children, implies that man has it in his power to form his character, by imitating a *different example*. It is a fact, alas ! that he is prone to copy the

moral *deformities*, rather than the moral *excellences* which are presented before his mental eye.

Thirdly : *The incidental element enters largely into human life.*

In a *drama* the scenes are frequently changed. Event follows event in rapid succession. There are startling developments at every turn. We are carried forward on an ever-increasing tide of excitement, to the terminus. So it is with life. It is replete with *incident*. Man is ever varying in his moods, in his acts, in his relations, in his circumstances and experiences. He does not continue the same for two days, nor two hours, nor two seconds. His life, in its phenomenal aspect, is like the floating cloud—at one time it is bright and luminous, at another it is dark and sombre, now charged with the elements of destruction, anon resting so soft and beautiful on the dappled sky. Thus it is too with the Christian life. There are alternate seasons of deep depression and exultant joy, of bitter disappointment and of sweet satisfaction, of turmoil, of agitation, and of calm repose. The drama is full of incident and the *scenes* are constantly changing.

II. THE CHARACTER THAT IS REPRESENTED IN THE MORAL DRAMA OF CHRISTIAN LIFE.

That character is *God Himself*, as manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ. "Be ye therefore *imitators* of God," etc.

First: *He is a Sublime Character.*

The merit of the literary drama depends to a great extent upon the significance of the *character* that is dramatized. The hero in the play must possess some prominent and startling peculiarities, which are calculated to render him conspicuous. There must be something in him, or in his supposed history, by which he is distinguished. To conceive of such a character, and to graphically delineate him, until he assumes an intense individuality, is generally considered to be among the loftiest achievements of creative genius. But the character to be personated in the moral drama of life is God Himself, as seen in Christ! There are attributes in God that cannot be represented by man, nor angel, nor any created intelligence,

however lofty. One alone in the universe can say with unqualified truthfulness, "He that hath seen *Me*, hath seen the *Father*." He is able to represent Him in all His infinite perfections. Though it is not in man's power to *imitate* God in *all* things, yet there are *some* things in which he, as an intelligent being, can *imitate* Him; and man is the only being on earth that is endowed with that ability.

Secondly: *He is a Holy Character.* Holiness is an essential attribute of the Divine Nature. It is said of Him, God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. He is absolutely holy—not having the slightest shadow of imperfection. He dwelleth in light unapproachable. The holiness of God is the *summation* of all His perfections. It is the glory and splendour of His Being. There is no attribute of His Nature that removes Him so far from man as a sinner, as His holiness. Man, though he has become a sinner, still retains a certain resemblance to God; but he bears none whatever to His *holiness*. He has lost the moral image. There is nothing that man needs, so much as holiness. Give him *that*, and all error will at once disappear from the intellect, all pollution from the affections, and all guilt from the conscience. Complete holiness is *perfect blessedness*. Though nature whispers not a syllable as to the holiness of God; yet we have a glorious *revelation* of it given us in *Jesus Christ*. He was the embodiment of holiness. It beamed in His every look, sounded in every word He spoke, and radiated in every act He performed! And He has given us an example, that we should follow Him. His whole life is vocal with the command to us, "*Be ye holy for I am holy.*"

Thirdly: *He is a Loving Character.* It is not said of Him that He loves merely, but that He *is* love. All love, whatever may be the human form of its manifestation,—whether paternal, filial, or fraternal,—comes from Him. As all the sap in the tree comes from the roots, all the blood in the body comes from the heart, all the water in the clouds comes from the seas, and all the light of the stars comes from the sun; so *all the love* in heaven and earth has its origin in God. His

love is unfathomable and all-comprehensive. It blooms in all beauty, pulsates in all true life, and vibrates in all melody. But, as all the varied hues of light, as reflected in the rainbow, are blended into *one white ray* in the sun ; so likewise, all the numerous manifestations of love, as witnessed in the universe, *centralize* in Christ, " who is the image of the invisible God " and " the brightness of His glory." -

III. THE ACTORS IN THIS MORAL DRAMA.

The *dramatis personæ* are believers in Christ. The Apostle regarded every Christian in the capacity of an *actor*. There are at least three things that we may fairly suppose every good actor must attend to.

First : *He must study thoroughly the character that he wishes to represent.* It is expedient that an actor should be perfectly familiar with every thought, feeling, trait, and peculiarity of the *character* whom he is to personate upon the stage. In order to acquire that familiarity, he must concentrate all his thoughts upon the character, and meditate diligently upon it until he has acquired a complete mastery of it. Some theatrical actors are known to devote years to the study of some one dramatic character, that they may be able to personate it perfectly. This is a trait in the conduct of an actor, that the Christian would do well to *imitate*. He should study carefully the nature, attributes, spirit, character, of that infinite *Being* whom he is called upon to imitate and *personate* in his Christian life. What a glorious subject for thought ! And how well it is calculated to expand the intellect, to purify the affections, to pacify the conscience, to stimulate every power of the soul, and elevate it in the scale of moral being !

Secondly : *He must have a genuine admiration for the character to be represented.* Man is the creature of his love. Whatever enlists his supreme *love*, ensures all his talents, time, and resources. For he will withhold nothing that may be demanded by the chief object of his affections. Thus the orator, the poet, and artist,—and in fact every intellectual aspirant, in whatever sphere of action he may be found,—is stimulated, by the *love* which he cherishes for his ideal, to labour persistently

until he has attained the excellence of which it is the embodiment. We never grow weary in *imitating* the object that we love. Here the Apostle exhorts the Ephesians to be "imitators of God, as dear (or loving) children." The stronger our love toward Him, the more faithfully shall we imitate Him.

Thirdly: *He must imbibe the spirit of the character that he represents.* It is generally desired that every attitude, gesture, look, tone, and facial expression be made conducive to the faithful *personation* of the character. So it should be with the Christian. He ought to live Christ—in every thought, feeling, and action. Thus putting off "the *old man* which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts," and by a renewal of the spirit of the mind, "put on the *new man*, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. The Christian's mind, and heart, and soul should become so thoroughly absorbed in the work of *personating* Christ, as that he would be utterly *oblivious of self*. So long as a person is conscious that the part he performs is simply *mechanical*, and not emanating from the deepest impulses of his being, it must necessarily be defective. The Christian must become self-oblivious if he would properly represent Christ. So that he can say, with Paul: "I live, yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me*." Sublime experience! He suppressed the imperfections of his own nature, that the excellences of Christ may appear with greater conspicuity in his life. You see more of *Jesus* than of *Paul* in the real life of the Apostle. Self-consciousness is characteristic of vain-gloriousness; self-obliviousness is a mark of the humility of genuine worth. Those who shall have done the greatest amount of good in the world, when their merits will be publicly acknowledged by Christ, will then exclaim with sincere astonishment, "When saw we Thee an hungered and fed Thee, or thirsty and gave Thee drink," etc. They will feel that whatever they had done, that it was due to the operations of His Spirit within them. They had entered into His Spirit, and His Spirit into them, and the result was, a glorious blessed life.

IV. THE THEATRE IN WHICH THIS MORAL DRAMA IS ACTED IS THE CHURCH.

By the Church in this place we do not mean any local ecclesiastical organization, but that moral state into which men are called by the Gospel, which is sometimes called the kingdom of heaven, or the Church the body of Christ. This is not limited by time and place; but wherever there are Christians, this Church exists. The church-world, in a sense, is *within* the social world; but is, at the same time, separate and distinct from it, as the theatre, the stadium, and the amphitheatre were within the town or province, all three of which are employed by the Apostle to illustrate some important and practical truths in connection with Church life. We observe, therefore, that it is *conveniently* located. It is a central position, like that occupied by the Tabernacle in the camp of Israel. Its *entrance* is sufficiently wide to admit the vilest sinner, and at the same time so strait as to exclude the smallest sin. It is *capacious* enough to accommodate all that will come. It has never been overcrowded. The *exercises* are always *worthy*. The *terms* of admittance, without money and without price.

V. THE SPECTATORS OF THIS MORAL DRAMA.

In writing to the Corinthians, who were familiar with the amphitheatre, the theatre, and the stadium, the Apostle says that he had fought with beasts at Ephesus. His words again. We are become a *theatre* to the world, to angels and to men.

New York.

P. L. DAVIS, M.A.

Subject: Herod the Tetrarch.

"At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, and said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him."—MATT. xiv. 1, 2.

THE whole narrative of which this is a part, has already been expounded by us.*

* See "Genius of the Gospel," p. 251.

We take these words of this imperial sceptic as suggesting,

I. THE BELIEVABILITY OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE BODY'S RESURRECTION. Herod's words, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead," evidently show that a literal resurrection from the dead was a doctrine that even he, though a Sadducee and an unbeliever, could believe. His words implied,—

First: That he believed in the resurrection of the *identical* man: "This is John the Baptist." The very man who had denounced his conduct, the stern reformer whom he had murdered, he believed had come up from his grave. Herod's words implied,—

Secondly: That he believed the resurrection man possessed *supernatural* power. "Mighty works do show forth themselves in him." He had known John when alive, but had never known him to perform a miracle; and perhaps, had a miracle, during his life, been ascribed to him, he would have denied the fact. He therefore seemed instinctively to feel that what a man could not accomplish during his life, he could do in his resurrection body. The Apostle Paul gives us to understand that the resurrection body would be endowed with attributes of a supernatural order. "It is sown in corruption," etc., etc.

Now we are not affirming that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and that the identical body will re-appear invested with super-mundane powers—this is not at present our point. All we say is, that it is believable, for Herod believed in it. Modern sceptics say that a literal resurrection of the body involves so many difficulties, that no sensible man can believe in it; that the idea of a human body coming out of its grave is too great an absurdity for human credence. Whether there will be a literal resurrection or not, is not now our question; all we say is, the thing is not unbelievable, for Herod believed in it. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" What a child cannot do, a man can accomplish with ease. There may be difficulties, but difficulties are relative things. What are

difficulties to one being are not so to others. A difficulty must be looked upon in reference to the capability of the agent who is to perform it. To Omnipotence the idea of difficulty is absurd. We take the words of this imperial sceptic as suggesting,—

II. THE SELF-DISTRUSTFUL CHARACTER OF INFIDELITY. Herod was a Sadducee, and theoretically rejected the doctrine of the body's resurrection. Perhaps he often argued against the doctrine, often ridiculed it. But now for a moment he believes in it. Infidelity has but little strength, it is a reed shaken by every wind. It is not like true faith—well rooted and well grounded: it is based on negations. Infidelity is always self-distrustful. Hence its restless eagerness for controversy and debate. He that believeth shall not make haste. On the contrary, he that believeth not is always in haste; he has no repose; in one word, infidelity is weak, timid, superstitious. No creed has any real lasting substance, and can retain its hold upon a man that is not founded,—

First: In convictions *self-formed*. And,—

Secondly: In convictions *congenial with the moral constitution of the soul*. It must agree with our moral intuitions, innate cravings and aspirations. Hence infidelity can never stand. It is always shifting; what it denies to-day it will accept to-morrow.

We take the words of this imperial sceptic as suggesting—

III. THE CHARACTER OF A GUILTY CONSCIENCE. What was it that led Herod to the conclusion? Was it his *creed*? It is supposed he was a Sadducee, and that therefore he theoretically denied the doctrine of the body's resurrection. Was it his *wish*? Had he a strong desire that John should rise again—that he, whom at one time he was delighted to hear, but whom he murdered, should visit his courts again as the prophet of the Lord? It is proverbial that a man is very apt to believe what he enthusiastically desires. But Herod could not have had this desire. His desire must have been never to see his face again; to bury the very memory of John. "This is John the Baptist, whom I beheaded."

The guilty conscience evoked from the regions of death his murdered victim, brought him to his eye, and made his prophetic voice to fall again upon his ear. The mountains around him seemed to ring with the prophet's voice. (1) An awakened conscience will preach to a man doctrines that he never believed before. There is something in man mightier than poetry, philosophy, or logic: it is conscience. (2) An awakened conscience will bring scenes the most repulsive to your view. It will haunt you with the ghosts of forgotten crimes. It will open the grave of the past, bring old sins to life, and make them look us in the face.

The Preacher's Finger-Post.

Subject: RELIGIOUS FANATICISM.

"The driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously."—2 KINGS ix. 20.

Jehu was a religious fanatic; his whole nature was on fire with indignation against the idolatry in his country under the reign of king Joram. Under this passion he perpetrated terrible enormities. He destroyed Jezebel, by ordering her to be thrown out through a window and having her body trampled in the dust (see verses 30-37). He then proceeded to exterminate the whole family of the idolatrous Ahab. He caused the heads of Ahab's sons to be cut off and to be 'browed in two heaps at the

gates of the city (x. 8), and on all Ahab's family and adherents he wrought a general slaughter. "But the most revolting of these deeds of blood remains to be told. When he arrived at Samaria and had cut off every branch of the house of Ahab that he could find (2 Kings x. 17), he ordered a general convention of all the worshippers of Baal throughout the land, and made every arrangement as if he would have one united universal act of homage to the false god. And so strict were his orders, that no worshipper of Baal could absent himself but upon pain of death. They assembled; and we are told that not a man was absent. Each of the worshippers was furnished

with a peculiar dress, that they might be distinguished from all others; and when the assembly was convened, Jehu took pains to exclude every individual except the worshippers of Baal. As soon as they commenced their worship, Jehu appointed a detachment of eighty men to go in among the assembled idolaters and put every one of them to death; and to ensure the execution of his orders he ordained that, if a single worshipper escaped, the life of him who suffered the escape should be forfeited. But there was no escape; every individual was put to the sword; the image of Baal was broken down and destroyed; and the temple was made the receptacle of offal and filth, in contempt and abhorrence of the idolatry which had been practised there; and every trace of Baal's worship was blotted out of Israel."

We may take this man's history to illustrate some of the worst features of fanaticism.

I. It "driveth furiously," with a HEARTLESS DISREGARD TO THE LIVES OF ALL WHO DIFFER FROM IT. What cared Jehu for the lives of those who differed from him in religious opinion? Nothing. Fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and whosoever adopted religious views and practised religious rites con-

trary to his own, he slew indiscriminately; and he literally gloated over the blood he shed. His glowing zeal consumed all that was human in him, and turned him into a ruthless demon. What was human life to him, compared with his religious dogmas? It has ever been so, and still is, with religious fanaticism. Witness inquisitions, martyrdoms, crusades. And in milder forms the same thing is seen, even in connection with the Christian religion, in these days. What do your religious fanatics, who often assemble in thousands to hoot out their impious crudities, care for the bodily interests, health, or life of those who differ from them? Religious fanaticism is essentially cruel.

II. It "driveth furiously" WITH AN OSTENTATIOUS SPIRIT. "Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord" (2 Kings x. 16). Jehu really did not care "for the Lord" or for true theology. He cared only for himself—self-display, self-glory. He desired his contemporaries to honour him as a heaven-inspired knight, as one valiant for the truth. Fanaticism is essentially ostentatious. It creates a morbid hunger for the applause of men. It will itinerate the country, have preachments every day of the week, prayer-meetings all the day, and drive "furi-

ously" on; but it will take good care to have the whole set forth in puffing advertisements and paraded in all the prints of the so-called "Christian world." "Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord." How unlike the true ministry of heaven, which does not cause its voice to be heard in the street, which does its work silently as the sunbeam.

"Fanaticism, soberly defined,
Is the false fire of an o'er-heated
mind;
It views the truth with a distorted
eye,
And either warps or lays it use-
less by;
'Tis narrow, selfish, arrogant, and
draws
Its sordid nourishment from
man's applause;
And while at heart sin unrelin-
quished lies,
Presumes itself chief favourite of
the skies."—*Cowper*.

III. It "driveth furiously"
UNDER THE COVER OF PRETENCE.
This Jehu resolved to destroy
all the worshippers of Baal;
but how did he set to work
in order to accomplish this
end? Not in a straight-
forward way. Inspiration
tells us, "Jehu did it in
subtily." Under the pre-
tence of having all the king-
dom united in worshipping
the false god, he ordered all
the worshippers of Baal to
assemble together on a certain
day and in a certain place; the
order was universally obeyed,
and we are told that not a
man was absent; but instead

of enlisting the multitudes in
the cause of worship, he
caused every man to be put
to death. There is a some-
what popular impression, that
fanaticism is always sincere.
This is a mistake; as a rule,
it is a lying thing. As it
works by falsehood, so it
works under its cover. Some
of the men who have taken
the most prominent part in
conventional revivals are
amongst the swindlers of the
age. "Fanaticism," says
Professor Lange, "dissolves
all the bonds of life and love,
but imputes the blame of it
to faith. It leads a man to
acts of betrayal, of rebellion,
and of murder, while he
imagines that he is offering
sacrifices acceptable to God.
It institutes a community of
hatred, in opposition to the
community of love, and treats
the fire of hell as if it were
sacred. It appears in the
guise of religion, but for the
purpose of banishing Christ
and His Gospel from the
earth."

CONCLUSION:—Infer not,
that because a minister, a
community, or a Church
are driving furiously in re-
ligious work, that they are
religious. Genuine religion
is a life, not a passion;
it is a river, silent and con-
stant as the stars, not a flood
rushing and roaring for the
hour.

Subject: HOLY DEAD.

"That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."—HEB. vi. 12.

Dr. Davidson translates this verse thus: "That ye become not dull, but imitators of them who through faith and long-suffering inherit the promises."

The words suggest a few thoughts concerning the *holy dead*.

I. They have reached a VERY ELEVATED POSITION. They "inherit the promises." The promises, how comprehensive, numerous, and glorious!

First: They embrace *vast possessions*. It is an inheritance "incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away." What an inheritance is that—how extensive, how fruitful, how enduring! It involves mansions, cities, etc., etc.

Secondly: They embrace *sublime fellowships*. What are the fellowships? The great and good men of all ages, the universe of angelic intelligences, Christ the Mediator of the new covenant, and God the Judge of all.

Thirdly: They embrace the most *perfect enjoyments*. "The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall lead them to fountains of living waters."

Fourthly: They embrace *celestial royalties*. They speak of thrones, dominions, and powers, of sitting down on the throne with Christ, of being

made kings and priests unto God.

Such is the exalted position which the holy dead have reached. They have not gone out of existence, but are living and conscious, and are in possession of riches, joys, involving an eternal weight of glory.

II. They have reached an elevated position THROUGH A CERTAIN COURSE OF SPIRITUAL CONDUCT. "Who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

First: "Through *faith*." Faith in what? Not merely in doctrines, however divine, or in facts, however glorious, but in a *Person*, and that Person Christ. "He that believeth in Me." A strong unwavering practical trust in Christ as the All-wise, All-loving, Almighty Saviour, is the faith that conducted them to their exalted positions.

Secondly: Through "*patience*." Patience implies *sensibility*. There is a hardness of nature, a natural stoicism, that is often confounded with patience; but it has nothing to do with it. Where there is no tender susceptibility there can be no patience. Patience implies *suffering*. Sensibility may exist, and yet without suffering there could be no patience. Patience implies *waiting*. It is an endurance. It has its eye and heart on coming deliver-

ance. Those who inherit the promises were men, while here, of *sensibility, suffering, and endurance*. "Ye have need of patience," etc. This is the path to that exalted state, it has to be reached, not by learning, not by ceremonies, not by merits, not by occasional services, but by "faith and patience," trust in Christ and patient endurance.

III. The course of spiritual conduct by which they reached their exalted position, IS BINDING ON ALL SURVIVORS. "That ye be not slothful, but *followers* of them."

First: We must *imitate* them. We must have their "faith and patience. Our patience must be like theirs; in its object, faith, constancy, and practical influence. Our patience must be like theirs; we must bear up with a holy magnanimity under all the trials and sufferings of this life, awaiting the great deliverance.

Secondly: We must imitate them with *earnestness*. "Be not slothful." In truth, without earnestness we shall never imitate them at all: "faith and patience" require earnestness in order to attain, preserve, and strengthen.

CONCLUSION: "Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience

the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."

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Subject: THE DIVINITY OF A TRUE MAN.

"And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing."—1 THESS. i. 6, 7, 8.

"The origin of the Church at Thessalonica is given in Acts xvii. Paul and his fellow labourers, Silas and Timothy, being driven out of Philippi, came to Thessalonica. Here was the principal synagogue of the country; and Paul, according to his custom, entered into it and taught. For three Sabbaths he preached to the Jews and the devout persons who came to worship, testifying that Jesus was the Christ. The result of his preaching is thus related by the sacred historian. "And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few." We are afterwards informed that the Jews excited the rabble to raise a tumult against the Christian preachers, in consequence of which Paul and

Silas were forced to leave the city secretly by night for Berea.

It would seem that the Church here was large and flourishing, and chiefly composed of Gentiles, for they are represented as having turned to God from idols.

We take these words as setting forth the fact that a genuine Christian is a *divine man*, that he has a close and vital connection with the Divine.

I. He is the RECIPIENT of the Divine. Paul speaks of the Christians at Thessalonica as "having received the word," that is, the word of the Lord. The "word" here is evidently the Gospel—that which Paul preached to them, and which, under his ministry, they received "in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost." Although, through the persecution of the Jews, on the introduction of the Gospel by the Apostle amongst them, they endured much affliction, that affliction was more than counterbalanced by the "joy that they had of the Holy Ghost." What matters bodily suffering, if you have joy in the Holy Ghost? We glory in tribulation, etc. A genuine Christian is a man who has received into him the Divine word. God's great thoughts have come into his intellect, touched his heart, and given a new moral impulse to his being. He who has not re-

ceived this Divine word intelligently and with practical effect, is no Christian. The Christian is a living Bible, he is the "word made flesh."

II. He is an IMITATOR of the Divine. "Ye became followers of us and of the Lord." The Apostles were Christians because they were "followers" of the Lord; and all who would be Christians must do the same, they must become "followers of the Lord."

First: The Lord, that is Christ, is the most *perfect* moral model. In Him we have all that can command the attention and admiration of the soul.

Secondly: The Lord, that is Christ, is the most *imitable* moral model. Sublimely great as Christ is, no character ever appeared in history so imitable as His. (1) Because no character is so powerful to awake our admiration. What we admire most, we imitate most. (2) Because no character is so easily understood. He is perfectly transparent. One principle—love—explains all His moral features and activities. (3) Because no character is permanently consistent. Here then is another essential to the genuine Christian. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

III. He is an EXAMPLE of the Divine. "So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and

Achaia." The two provinces, Macedonia and Achaia, together, for the entire Greek domain; so that what is meant is, that those Thessalonian Christians who became imitators of the Apostles and their Lord, in their turn became examples to all Greeks. The genuine Christian not only receives and imitates, but reflects and radiates the Divine. He is the brightest and the fullest revelation of God on the earth; there is more of the Divine seen in the truly Christly soul than there is in the starry heavens and the blooming landscapes. "Ye are my witnesses," etc.

IV. He is a PROCLAIMER of the Divine. "For from you sounded out the word of the Lord." Sounded (*exēchetai*) is an image from a trumpet filling with its clear-sounding echo all the surrounding places. They sounded out the Gospel, not only in enthusiastic utterances, but in noble and generous deeds. Thessalonica was a large maritime and commercial city; and its Christian merchants would, in all their transactions with foreign traders, ring out the Gospel.

CONCLUSION:—A genuine Christian, then, is a *Divine man*. There is in a moral, as well as in a constitutional sense, a "divinity within him." He is the recipient, the imitator, the example, and the herald of the Divine.

Subject: INQUIRY OF THE PAST.

"For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it?"—DEUT. iv. 32.

1. The past may refer (1) to general history. This the reference of Moses in the text. (2) To individual life. This the reference we would have you make now.

2. Inquiry of the past. (1) There are those who do not think about the past. This arises from (a) thoughtlessness; (b) conscious guilt; (c) a false philosophy. (2) It is our wisdom to "ask of the days that are past." (a) Because the past is in existence now. (b) Because for the past we are responsible. (c) Because the past is full of useful lessons.

I. Ask of past BLESSINGS. How have they been received?

1. The blessings. (1) Material. (2) Spiritual. Prayers answered, inspiring and uplifting influences imparted, help rendered, soul's need supplied, strength in trial, light in darkness, wisdom in ignorance, discipline to purify and perfect. No good withheld. 2. Their reception. Have they been received (1) as from God? (2) As undeserved mercies? (3) In a thankful spirit?

II. Ask of past OPPORTUNI-

TIES. How have they been used?

1. Opportunities of *getting* good. (1) Mental good; (2) moral good. Have they been turned to profit, or lost for ever? 2. Opportunities of *doing* good. (1) To the bodies of men. (2) To the souls of men. Instructing the ignorant, guiding the perplexed, comforting the sorrowful, rebuking the sinner, reclaiming the erring, speaking the word in season, inviting our neighbours to hear the Gospel, training our families, stimulating men to live higher lives. Are we not verily guilty of neglect?

III. Ask of past SINS. Have they been repented of and pardoned? 1. Sins of omission. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." 2. Sins of commission. (1) Against God, irreverence, unsubmitiveness, ingratitude, unfaithfulness. (2) Against man, injustice, untruthfulness, uncharitableness.

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sin," etc.

T. B.

Subject: THE CONDITION OF SPIRITUAL POWER.

"Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus

said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." —MATT. xvii. 19-21.

INTRODUCTION. The historical circumstance and its symbolical teaching. Faith the condition of spiritual power.

I. ITS OBJECTS. Upon what must our faith be exercised?

1. We must have faith in God, as the source of salvation—

(1) In His perpetual presence,

(2) In His unvarying power,

(3) In His faithful promise.

2. We must have faith in man, as the subject of salvation—

(1) In his inherent depravity,

(2) In his religious possibilities, (3) In his infinite worth.

3. We must have faith in the gospel as the instrument of salvation. Must not yield to the clamour for something more advanced, nor listen to the charge that Christianity is effete (Rom. i. 16).

II. ITS POSSIBILITIES. "If ye have faith as a grain," etc.

1. Their *Range*. "Ye shall say unto this mountain." (1)

Does the range of faith's possibilities comprehend the working of physical miracles? This cannot be inferred from the phraseology of the text, even on the supposition of its literal interpretation, for it was spoken in the age of miracles. We think that it cannot be inferred either from

any other passage. Supernatural powers (in a physical sense) now unnecessary. Their perpetuation would frustrate the purpose for which given, and would be inconsistent with the spirituality of Christ's kingdom. (2) Their range does comprehend the working of unlimited moral miracles. Mountains of prejudice, ignorance, misery, and sin are removable by true faith.

2. Their *Philosophy*. What is the connection between faith and power? (1) There is the connection of Divine appointment. God has ordained it as one of the fixed laws of the spiritual universe. Faith links on the machinery of the spiritual universe to the power of God. (2) There is the connection of reflex influence. This divine law not an arbitrary one, but founded in the inherent and everlasting fitness of things. Faith is an imperial stimulant in the soul of man. It is (a) the spring of activity. (b) The soul of tenacity. (c) The death of fear. (d) The inspiration of self-sacrifice. (e) The root of holiness. (3) There is the connection of relative contagion. Our faith inspires faith in others. We believe in the man who himself believes. When the world begins really to believe that the Church means what it says, and is thoroughly and consistently in earnest,

the results will be marvellous. All the devils in humanity will be driven out in terror and confusion.

III. ITS VIOLATION "unbelief"

1. The fact of unbelief. The Church is, in this age, violating the condition of spiritual power: hence its weakness. This proved by resort to and dependence on questionable expedients; sensational tricks to trap men into the Church.

2. The causes of unbelief. (1) The atmosphere of infidelity by which we are surrounded. (2) The spirit of self-gratification in which we indulge. (3) The habit of undevotion into which we have fallen.

CONCLUSION: "Lord, increase our faith." "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion." Oh for a mightier faith in man, in the fact of his sinfulness, in the reality of his danger, in the infinitude of his worth! A mightier faith in Jesus Christ, in the history of His life, in the efficacy of His death, in the power of His intercession! A mightier faith in Christianity, in the universality of its provisions, in the success of its proclamation! A mightier faith in the Holy Ghost, in the reality of His influences, in the necessity of His power, in the largeness and faithfulness of His promise! A mightier faith in the unseen, in the reality of its existence, in the importance of its interests, in its

nearness to our being! A mightier faith in the future, in the certainty of millennial blessedness, in the solemnities

of the Judgment Day, in the loveliness of heaven, and in the terribleness of hell!

T. BARON.

Seeds of Sermons from the Minor Prophets.

If the Bible as a whole is inspired, it is of vast importance that all its Divine ideas should be brought to bear upon the living world of men. Though the pulpit is the organ Divinely intended for this work, it has been doing it hitherto in a miserably partial and restricted method. It selects isolated passages, and leaves whole chapters and books for the most part untouched. Its conduct to the Minor Prophets may be taken as a case in point. How seldom are they resorted to for texts! and yet they abound with splendid passages throbbing with Divine ideas. It is our purpose to go through this section of the Holy Word; selecting, however, only such verses in each chapter and book as seem the most suggestive of truths of the most vital interest and universal application.

Having passed rapidly through HOSHA, JOEL, and AMOS, we come now to OBADIAH. Of the history of Obadiah we literally know nothing. His name, which signifies Worshipper of Jehovah, and his short prophecy afford the only information concerning him. From verses 11 to 14, which undoubtedly contain an allusion to the exultation of the Edomites over the capture and plunder of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. In all probability he must have lived near the time of Jeremiah; and indeed there is almost a verbal agreement between his utterance in verses 1 to 8 and those contained in Jeremiah xlix. If we suppose his prophecy was delivered between the year a.c. 588, when Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldeans, and the termination of the siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, we shall not be far wrong. As to his prophecy, it is the *shortest* in the Bible: one chapter comprehends all. Its *subject* is the destruction of Edom on account of its cruelty to Judah, Edom's mother, and the restoration of the Jews. Its *style* is marked by animation, regularity, and clearness.

No. CXV.

Subject: SOCIAL RETRIBUTION.

"For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head."—OBADIAH i. 15.

In the preceding number we have furnished outlines of three homilies on the first sixteen verses of this chapter. *Social cruelty* we considered as the grand subject of the whole. This was presented

(1) as a sin against the Creator; and this was proved by the constitution of the human soul, the common relation of the race to God, the common interest of Christ in the race, and the universal teaching of the Bible. This social cruelty was presented (2) as when perpetrated against a *brother*, specially offensive to God. And three reasons were mentioned for this—the obligation to love a brother is stronger, the chief human institution is outraged, and the tenderest

human loves are wounded. This social cruelty was presented (3) as working in various forms from generation to generation. In this view it was shown that cruelty has various forms of working, that Omniscience observes it in all its workings, and that a terrible retribution awaits it in all its forms.

Now *Social Retribution* is the subject of the text before us, and this subject we have only just touched upon on p. 171.

There are two great popular errors concerning the subject of Retribution.

First: That *retribution is reserved entirely for the future state*. That the future state will be a state of retribution—a state in which every man shall be rewarded according to his works, must be admitted by every thoughtful student of the Bible. But retribution is here, retribution is an eternal principle of the Divine government, it follows sin at all times and for ever. The men and nations whose acts are registered in the Bible proclaim the grand truth, "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed on the earth, much more the wicked and the sinner." "Bishop Butler, in accordance with the same doctrine, lays it down as an axiom, that this life is the allotted and appointed period of retributive justice. Having assumed this as an undoubted fact, he proceeds to infer therefrom the certainty of the future judgment. How many masters in Israel arrive at the same wholesome conclusion on quite opposite premises—the entire absence of systematic retributive justice during this life!

'We find,' he says, 'that the true notion of the Author of our nature is that of a Master or Governor, prior to the consideration of His moral attributes. The fact of our case, which we find by experience, is, that He actually exercises dominion or government over us at present, by rewarding and punishing us for our actions in as strict and proper a sense of these words, and even in the same sense, as children, servants, subjects, are rewarded and punished by those who govern them.'" Did not retributive justice strike our first parents and Cain at once? Did it not strike the antediluvian world, Sodom and Gomorrah, etc.?

Another popular error concerning retribution is—

Secondly: That it is a *special infliction of God*. We do not say that God may not break through the established order of things to inflict punishment, nor that He has not done so, for the Bible furnishes us with instances to the contrary. All we say is, this is not the general rule. Divine punishments are natural events. Divine justice works as naturally as Divine goodness. Sin and punishment are indissolubly linked as cause and effect.

The text suggests two thoughts in relation to *social retribution*.

I. That it is *OFFENTIMES* A RETURN TO THE OFFENDER OF THE SAME KIND OF SUFFERING AS HE INFLICTED ON HIS VICTIM. "As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head." The bitter cup thou hast given to thine enemy shall come

round to thee, and of its dregs thou shalt drink." This principle is stated by Christ. "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." The Bible is full of examples of this principle. Isaac told a lie, affirming that his wife is his sister, and he is told a lie by his son Jacob, who declared himself to be Esau. Jacob had deceived his aged parent in relation to Esau, his sons deceive him with regard to Joseph. He had embittered the declining years of his aged sire, his children embittered his. Again, Joseph was sold by his brethren as a bond-servant into Egypt: in Egypt his brethren are compelled to resign themselves as bond-servants to him. All history is full of examples, and everywhere in modern society illustrative cases may be selected. The deceiver himself is deceived, the fraudulent is himself cheated, the hater is himself hated, the cruel is often ruthlessly treated. Thus, "as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee."

"Hear the just law, the judgment of the skies;
He that hates truth shall be the dupe of lies."—*Cowper*.

Another remark suggested in relation to *social retribution* is—

II. That it often APPEARS TO COME AS A SPECIAL VISITATION OF ALMIGHTY GOD. "The day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen." All days are His days. But it is not until the guilty conscience is smitten with a sense of sin that it sees Him and feels that the day is full of God. Electricity pervades the universe, is ubi-

quitous; but men become conscious of it, and talk of it only when it flashes in lightning and breaks in thunder. So with God's justice. It is everywhere; but when the guilty conscience feels its punitive touch it calls it the day of judgment. The righteous are *now* going into life eternal, every righteous deed is a step onward: the wicked are *now* going into everlasting punishment, with every sin they tramp downward.

CONCLUSION:—Learn that no soul can sin with impunity, that every sin carries with it punishment. "The gods are just, and of our present vices make whips to scourge us." It may be, indeed, through the deadness of your conscience and the superabundant mercies of this life, you may not feel the retributive lash as you will feel it at some future time. But retribution is working here.

"We still have judgment here that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which being taught, return
To plague the inventor. This even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice
To our own lips."—*Shakespeare*.

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No. CXVI.

Subject: THE TRUE CHURCH, OR THE COMMUNITY OF THE GOOD. (1) A BENEFICENT POWER.

"But upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.—
OBADIAH i. 17.

Obadiah here commences his predictions respecting the re-

storation of the Jews from Babylonish captivity, their re-occupation of Canaan, and the reign of the Messiah. While the surrounding nations were to disappear, the Jews should regain the possession of the land of their fathers. Mount Zion may be taken here as the symbol of the true Church of God, that is, the community of godly men existing on this earth. In this sense it is referred to in Hebrews. Here the whole passage may be taken as representing this true Church or godly community in three aspects—as a beneficent power, a consuming power, and an aggressive power. The subject of the sketch should be the first subject, viz. as the beneficent power, and this we have in the seventeenth verse. Three thoughts are suggested by the words concerning the Church as a beneficent power.

I. It is connected with DELIVERANCE. "Upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance." Mount Zion was the asylum for those who had escaped. In Mount Zion shall be the *escaped*. From Babylonian captivity and suffering they returned to Mount Zion, or Jerusalem, and were safe. There they enjoyed their old protection. In the true Church there is spiritual safety; it is a refuge that is built upon a rock, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. It is watched by the infinite love and guarded by the almighty power of Christ; its blessed Keeper never slumbers nor sleeps. Oh ye imperilled spirits pursued by the powers of hell, led by the devil, captives and sold under sin, flee to

this Mount Zion, this true Church of God, this community of godly men, which is at once the organ and the residence of Christ.

II. It is connected with PURITY. "There shall be holiness." Moral pollution, or sin, is the source of all the calamities that befall men. Mount Zion is a consecrated spot. If there is holiness anywhere it is in connection with that community of men called the Church, which embraces the principles, cherishes the spirit, follows the example of the Son of God. True, they are not perfect yet; but they are in the process of cleansing, and are already holy as compared with the pollutions of the ungodly world.

III. It is connected with ENJOYMENT. "And the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions." "Though the houses of Jacob and Joseph are here spoken of separately, it was not the intention of the prophet to teach that the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel would be re-established. Yet the special mention of Joseph clearly shows that the ten tribes were to return at the same time, and, jointly with Judah and Benjamin, to possess the land of Palestine and the neighbouring regions. See Isaiah xi. 12-14; Hosea i. 11. The restored Hebrews would unitedly subdue the Idumeans; which they did in the time of John Hyrcanus, who compelled them to be circumcised, and so incorporated them with the Jews that they henceforward formed part of the nation."

The word "possess" here means *enjoy*: enjoy their possessions. The community of the

true Church alone enjoy their possessions. They are a happy people; all things are theirs; they are full of joy; they even glory in tribulation. "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound."

No. CXVII.

Subject: THE TRUE CHURCH,
OR THE COMMUNITY OF THE
GOOD. (2) A CONSUMING
POWER.

"And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau; for the Lord hath spoken it."—OBADIAH i. 18.

There is a fire in the true Church. Notice—

I. THE CHARACTERISTICS THIS FIRE DISPLAYS. What is the fire? The fire of *truth*, that burns up error; the fire of *right*, that burns up wickedness; the fire of *love*, that burns up selfishness. "I am come," said Christ, "to kindle a fire upon the earth." "Is not my word like a fire?" First: The fire in the Church is a *strong* fire. It has burnt an enormous amount of wickedness in every form, age, and land. It has burnt through the fiercest storms of centuries. Secondly: It is an *extending* fire. Its flames are ever advancing, they reach farther to-day than ever. The most brilliant systems of men, ethical, theological, and philosophic, however brilliant, have been but sparks compared to this; they have burnt on a little and gone out in darkness. Thirdly: It is a *steady* fire. It

does not flare and flash, but burns its way silently wherever it goes. Fourthly: It is an *unquenchable* fire. Men have tried to put it out, oceans of infidelity and depravity have been poured upon it, but it burns on. Notice—

II. THE MATERIALS THIS FIRE CONSUMES. "Stubble." What is moral depravity in all its forms—theoretical and practical, religious, social, political? What is it, however old, however decorated with worldly power and grandeur? What is it? "Stubble." It is not a rock, that stands fixed amidst the surges of time; not a tree, that has roots that may grow for ever; it is mere stubble, dry, sapless, worthless "stubble," ready for the fire. Error to truth, wrong to right, malice to love, is but stubble to fire.

CONCLUSION—God speed this fire until the whole world of wickedness shall be destroyed, until its heavens be dissolved, its earth burnt up, and its elements melt with fervent heat, and there come out of it "a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness!"

No. CXVIII.

Subject: THE TRUE CHURCH,
OR THE COMMUNITY OF THE
GOOD. (3) AN AGGRESSIVE
POWER.

"And they of the south shall possess the mount of Esau; and they of the plain the Philistines: and they shall possess the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria: and Benjamin shall possess Gilead. And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel shall possess that of the Canaan-

ites, even unto Zarephath; and the captivity of Jerusalem, which is in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south."—ORADIAH i. 19, 20.

By the "south," or southern part of Palestine, is here meant those who should occupy it; and by the "plain," those who should occupy the low country along the shore of the Mediterranean.

According to the relative positions of those who should take possession of the different parts of the Holy land, was to be the enlargement of their territory by the annexation of the adjoining regions which had formerly been occupied by allies or hostile powers. As there is no subject specified before the country of Edom and the country of Samaria, it seems to be intimated that the regions of Ephraim and Samaria were to be occupied by the Jews and the Israelites jointly, without any regard to tribal distinctions; and the reason why the tribe of Benjamin is mentioned, is merely on account of the proximity of Gilead to the territory which it originally possessed.—*Elzas*. "The promise here," says an old expositor, "no doubt has a spiritual signification, and had its accomplishment in the setting up of the Christian Church, the Gospel—Israel in the world; and shall have its accomplishment more and more in the enlargement of it, and the additions made to it, till the mystical body is completed. When ministers and Christians prevail with their neighbours to come to Christ, to yield themselves to the Lord, they possess them. The converts

that Abraham had made are said to be the souls that he had gotten (Gen. xii. 5). The possession is gained, not *vi et armis*—by force and arms; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual; it is by the preaching of the Gospel, and the power of Divine grace going along with it, that this possession is got and kept."

That the true Church is an aggressive power will appear from considering the Gospel, which is at once its inspiration, its life, and its instrument. Consider therefore,—

I. THE ELEMENTS OF WHICH THE GOSPEL IS COMPOSED. It is made up of two great elements, "grace and truth," that is, eternal reality and Divine benevolence. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." To show the aggressiveness of these two principles, two facts may be stated.

First: That the human soul is made to feel their *imperial* force. It is true that the soul in its unregenerate state is ruled by directly opposite elements—error and selfishness. But even error has power over it only so long as it regards it as reality, and selfishness influences it under the guise of love. It is the truth when made clear to it that comes with a conquering power; it is love or grace that transports its heart. The human soul is made for these two elements.

Secondly: That the human soul is bound to *yearn* after these elements as its highest good. Its deep hunger is for truth and for reality, for benevolence or love. It has no natural hunger for error, no natural hunger for selfishness.

Thirdly: That the human soul is everywhere *resilient* without these elements. It is only as the soul gets truth and grace into it that it becomes settled, calm, self-united. These are facts connected with the human soul, and these facts show the aggressiveness of the Gospel. Consider,—

II. THE PROSELYTIZING SPIRIT WHICH THE GOSPEL ENGENDERS. As soon as ever the Gospel takes real possession of a soul, that soul becomes intensely solicitous to spread it abroad. It becomes what Jeremiah describes a "fire in the bones." Peter said, "We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard." Paul said, "The love of Christ constraineth us because we thus judge," etc. "Necessity is laid upon us." Every genuine recipient, then, of the Gospel becomes a missionary, a propagandist, a moral knight, to battle against the mighty hosts of error and selfishness. Each member of the true

Church or godly community becomes, by a moral necessity, a soldier of the Cross. Consider—

III. THE TRIUMPHS WHICH THE GOSPEL HAS ALREADY ACHIEVED. Compare the influence of the Gospel in the world now to what it was when Christ was on earth. It was then confined to one lonely soul, the soul of Jesus of Nazareth; it is now in the possession of millions. The springlet has become an Amazon; the grain has covered islands and continents; the little stone has grown into a mountain that bids fair to fill the earth.

CONCLUSION.—Such thoughts as these tend, we think, to demonstrate the essential aggressiveness of the true Church. It will one day take possession of all heathendom, with its "mount of Esau," the "plains of the Philistines," the "fields of Ephraim" and the "fields of Samaria," and what Canaanites there are as far as Zarephath.

THE OPPRESSOR AND THE OPPRESSED.—The oppressor is even more to be pitied than the oppressed, the persecutor than the persecuted, the slave-driver than the slave. We should rather stand up at the stake with Servetus than sit with Calvin on the judgment-seat. We should prefer to eat a crust with Chatterton, rather than partake of certain repasts, in short, to fare with Lazarus instead of feasting with Dives. This brief life once closed, all tyranny is at an end; but how shall it fare with the tyrant before the Chancery of heaven. Alas! he knew it not or knowing felt not what he did. Be ye comforted then, brother, for the developed soul will rue the evil it has done. The victim shall have compassion on his oppressor, and divinest compassions be rendered before high heaven. For God, having made man for an excellent end, will not abandon the development of his destiny.—*Dr. M'Cormac.*

Biblical Criticism.

Subject: The Christian Race.

Τοιγαροῦν καὶ ἡμεῖς τοσούτων ἔχοντες περικείμενον ἡμῖν νέφος μαρτύρων ὄγκον ἀποθέμενοι πάντα καὶ τὴν εὐπερίστατον ἁμαρτίαν, δι' ὑπομονῆς τρέχωμε τὸν προκειμένον ἡμῖν ἀγῶνα, ἀφορώντες εἰς τὸν τῆς πίστεως, ὀρχηγὸν καὶ τελειωτὴν Ἰησοῦν, ὃς ἀντὶ τῆς προκειμένης αὐτῷ χαρᾶς, ὑπέμεινε σταυρὸν, αἰσχύνῃ καταφρονήσας, ἐν δεξιᾷ τε τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκάθισεν.—HEB. xii. 1, 2.

Τοιγαροῦν καὶ ἡμεῖς. It has been well observed, that *τοιγαροῦν*, a full and sonorous conjunction which occurs only another time in the New Testament, and that in Paul's writings, is most happily chosen here as marking the commencement of a lengthened admonition grounded upon the long list of cases already detailed. *Καὶ* refers to these cases, and means that we also, like the ancients, should rouse ourselves to action. There is in our version an unhappy transposition of the words, which puts a sentiment into the verse that is not in the original. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with a cloud of witnesses." This implies that the ancients too had been surrounded with witnesses during their struggle. Although this may have been the case, yet no such sentiment is expressed in the original. The meaning is: "Wherefore let us also, seeing we are surrounded with witnesses, run."

Τοσούτων ἔχοντες περικείμενον ἡμῖν νέφος μαρτύρων. There are many examples in the Greek authors of *νέφος* used to denote a multitude. The persons referred to without a doubt are the ancient believers, whose achievements and sufferings are recorded in the preceding chapter. They are designated *μαρτύρων*. The Greek word *μάρτυς*, like our own term witness, sometimes means persons who bear testimony to a truth or fact previously known to them, and sometimes it means persons who are present to behold what is done, whether they give evidence regarding it or not. According to the former view, the term would refer to ancient believers as having borne testimony by their lives and by their death to God's faithfulness and truth. According to the latter, it would

represent them as present to behold the struggles and conflicts of believers, their own race having been long since successfully finished. In favour of the latter view decisive evidence is furnished by the phrase *περικείμενον ἡμῖν*, which represents the crowd of witnesses as placed around the Hebrews during their struggle; and the idea of their presence is employed to stimulate the followers of Christ to unfaltering zeal and effort. Still, however, the question may be raised, whether this passage really teaches that departed saints do continue to know and to take an interest in what is done upon the earth; or whether the Apostle's representation is merely to be viewed as part of the machinery employed to complete the representation of a scene of contest. At the Olympic games there was the course, there was the goal, there were runners, there were judges, there were spectators. The Christian life, too, is a race, and the Apostle surrounds the course with a crowd of spectators; but are we warranted from such a figurative description to infer that Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Gideon, and Barak, and Samson, and David, and Samuel are actually present to behold us, while we strain every nerve to reach the goal? Such a conclusion might be more than the passage could well sustain. Yet the crowd of spectators must mean something; otherwise the Apostle employs a motive which, after all, is a mere-fancy. Does it not then seem necessary to suppose that, although departed saints may not actually be standing around us to watch our movements, yet through some channel or other they are acquainted with the course which we are pursuing? If the Apostle had simply said, that while running the race set before us we should imagine ourselves to be surrounded by the saints of bygone days, and strive to act as we would do if they were really present—then we should have understood that he did not mean to insinuate that they really knew anything of what we are doing. His language is altogether different from this. He says, we ought to run with alacrity, because we have a multitude of invisible witnesses around us. Where a similar scene is described by Paul, in 1 Cor. iv. 9, he says, "we are

a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men." Does not this imply that angels are acquainted with our procedure on earth? Is there not the same ground in the clause under consideration for extending this knowledge to the spirits of just men made perfect? Doubtless the whole representation of the Christian life as a race is figurative; but if we may set aside the spectators whom the Apostle places upon the scene, and maintain that they know nothing at all about us, why may we not equally set aside the Judge, and affirm that He takes no cognizance of our procedure? Yea, why may we not annihilate the race itself, and set the whole down as a dream? Doubtless, in the interpretation of figurative language, there is a danger of understanding it too literally and grossly; but equally, on the other, there is a danger of robbing it of all significance whatever. The gross view of the *ρέφος μαρτύρων* would be, that departed saints are drawn up in ranks beside us to mark our steps. The correct and proper view seems to be, that they really do know something of us and feel an interest in our faithful and persevering service of Christ.

From the description of the spectators the Apostle passes on to mention the preparations needful for successfully running the Christian race: *ἔγκον ἀποθέμενοι πάντα καὶ τὴν εὐπερίστατον ἁμαρτίαν*. The word *ἔγκος* signifies a tumour, a swelling, any augmentation of size beyond the normal bulk. It also signifies weight or encumbrance. The signification of corpulency, although favoured by Bleek and Tholuck and others, is altogether unsuitable here: for how could a runner lay aside his superabundant flesh when the spectators have already appeared upon the ground? Abstinence and regimen require a length of time to produce their effect upon the body. Doubtless, therefore, weight or encumbrance is the meaning to be assigned to the word here; and everything must be included which the runner may have about his person, even all superabundant clothing. But the language of the Apostle is figurative, and therefore the question arises, What does it mean when applied to believers? It is a very common idea, that it means sin in general as the main hindrance to a godly career. And

there could be no doubt at all in regard to this view if the phrase *καὶ τὴν εἰσπερίστατον ἁμαρτίαν* were not subjoined; but the conjunction of the two phrases involves the question in considerable difficulty. Is the second explanatory of the first, or does it exhibit something that is completely new, or does it bring prominently forward something already included in *ῥυκος*, and differing from it as species from genus? Ebrard contends that the two expressions must be exclusive of one another, and that consequently *ῥυκος* must refer to things not sinful in themselves, yet calculated to impede religious progress. But he overlooked the circumstance that the two phrases are not homogeneous. The one applies literally to a runner and the other applies literally to a Christian. Were they homogeneous, there would be no room for doubt that they referred to different kinds of hindrance; but their mixed character, as literal and figurative, renders it probable that the one is an explanation of the other. What *ῥυκος* is to a race, that *ἁμαρτία* is to a Christian. Yet we are not obliged to suppose that the two are exactly commensurate. Expounded of the Christian, *ῥυκος* must mean everything calculated to retard his progress—mistaken ideas of religion, such as many of the Jews entertained, too great entanglement with the affairs of life, and all sinful affections and practices; all these come under the comprehensive phrase *πάντα ῥυκον*; and then *τὴν ἁμαρτίαν* is added to bring into view what is the principal burden and what in fact gives to everything else its power of being a burden. Were you, for the purpose of maintaining a complete distinction between the phrases, to suppose *ῥυκος* descriptive only of the cares of life and such things as were not sinful in themselves, then you would have nothing in the literal runner that afforded a counterpart to sin in the Christian. Were you, on the other hand, to make *ῥυκος* and *ἁμαρτία* exactly commensurate, then it would be implied that nothing could be obstructive of the Christian's course unless it were sinful *per se*.

The epithet applied to *ἁμαρτίαν* requires particular notice. *Εἰσπερίστατος* occurs nowhere else within the whole compass of

Greek literature, and therefore its meaning must be settled simply on etymological grounds and by means of the context. Various significations have been proposed, grounded on the meaning of *περίστασις*, *περίστατος*, and *περιύστημι*. *Περίστασις* signifies circumstances, engagements of life, also a reverse, peril. It has therefore been argued by Salmasius, that *ἐνπερίστατος* may signify greatly involved in affairs, and by Kypke, looking at the last signification of the noun, viz., peril, that it may mean exposed to danger. But Tholuck objects to both these meanings that they rather describe the predicates of a person than of a thing. Another meaning of *περίστασις* is a crowd standing round, whence *περίστατος* is used to signify, surrounded and admired by the crowd: *ἐνπερίστατος*, therefore, might naturally enough bear the same signification intensified, viz., greatly admired, and much followed after, and this is the signification adopted by Wetstein and Bøhene; but though it seems defensible on etymological grounds and has this great argument in its favour that it follows the analogy of the actually existing adjective *περίστατος*, yet it does not well suit the scope of the Apostle's discourse. Again, the verb *περιύστημι* signifies to bring round to one's own views, to change to the worse, and therefore Carpzov and Schulz assign to *ἐνπερίστατος* the signification of seducing, deceitful alluring on all sides. The idea exactly suits the scope of the passage, deceitfulness being one of the leading characteristics of sin; but it has been objected to this view, that all the adjectives in *τος* formed from *ῥιστημι* or any of its compounds, have an intransitive or passive signification. Again, *περιύστασθαι* in the middle signifies to place oneself round, to surround; and therefore it has been concluded that the adjective *ἐνπερίστατος* may mean readily surrounding a person, cleaving to him. This signification has drawn around it the greatest number of supporters. It seems to rest upon a sound etymological basis, and it gives a description of sin which is perfectly just in itself and which exactly suits the complexion of the passage. Sin is an encumbrance which cleaves to man—it besets him on all sides. "Easily besetting" is a pretty good translation, yet it is apt to suggest the idea

of an enemy conducting an assault; but the governing participle *ἀποθέμενοι* requires that sin be considered, not in the light of a foe advancing upon us, but rather as something which clings fast to us, so as to impede our movements. It surrounds us as ivy does trees. We must throw it aside, if we would run successfully the Christian race.

It is a very common idea, that the Apostle is here speaking, not of sin in general, but of the particular sins which individuals feel themselves to be most liable to fall into, so that besetting sin has become quite synonymous with favourite vice. This view is grounded upon the English version, and receives no countenance from the Greek phrase, which points to sin in general and describes it as cleaving too closely to man. If there was any one sin more in the Apostle's view than another, it was probably apostasy, into which many circumstances conspired at that time to seduce men; but the language employed is quite general and cannot mean the favourite sins of different individuals. Each is admonished to lay aside all sin, and doubtless common sense dictates that the greatest effort should be made to overcome those evil inclinations which we are sensible have the greatest power over us.

All needful preparation having thus been made for the race we must run with strenuous effort, *δι' ὑπομονῆς τρέχωμεν τὸν προκείμενον ἡμῖν ἀγῶνα*. Beza understands *ἀγῶνα* to mean the ground where the contest in question takes place; but in the New Testament the word almost always designates the struggle itself. The word is of a general kind, and means any conflict; but here it must be understood of a race. *Προκείμενον ἡμῖν* expresses the idea that the race is set before us or assigned to us, and it is our duty to run *δι' ὑπομονῆς*, with patience. *Ὑπομονή*, however, involves fully more of the idea of activity than our word patience. It means constancy, endurance. There are many difficulties to be encountered by the Christian. There is a course marked out for him by his Lord. And he must pursue it at all hazards. The very idea of a race involves the necessity of strenuous exertion. We must be prepared for fatigue and toil. The runner too was obliged to

pursue a definite course. If he overleaped certain barriers, he excluded himself from all hope of the prize. So must we not merely run, but we must run the race set before us. The course is prescribed in Scripture. Barriers are erected all along the line, and we must keep within the limits assigned to us. If we disregard these, it is not the Lord's race we are running, but a race of our own; and in the end we shall have the fearful disappointment of finding that the prize is not for us. Run strenuously, run in the right course.

Having surrounded the scene of action with spectators in order to animate the runners, the Apostle next brings into view a motive of a far higher kind, viz., the example of the Lord Jesus Christ: ἀφορῶντες εἰς τὸν τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγὸν καὶ τελειωτὴν Ἰησοῦν —looking unto Jesus, etc. Ἀφορῶντες is a most appropriate word. It has nearly the same signification as ἀνίστασθαι in chap. xi. 26. It indicates a concentration of the mind upon some special object, to the exclusion of other things that may be courting the attention. The Christian must look away from much that is near at hand and very attractive, and fix his eye upon the Saviour, who is waiting to receive him at the end of his career. So the runner in an earthly race looks neither to the right hand nor to the left, but straight on to the place where the judge is seated.

In this verse there is a description presented of what Jesus is, of what He has done, and of the glorious reward which He has received on high, all designed to stir up believers to the earnest and faithful imitation of His example. What Christ is, is exhibited in these words: τὸν τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγὸν καὶ τελειωτὴν. Various views have been taken of this clause. Schlichting, Stuart, and others conceive it to describe our Lord as the founder and consummator of the Christian religion. And doubtless there are passages where πίστις means, by metonymy, the truth believed, as in Acts vi. 7, "the priests became obedient to the faith," that is, embraced the Gospel; and Jude 3, "the faith once delivered to the saints." But it is a conclusive argument against this exposition, that throughout the whole passage upon which our text is grounded,

and of the subject handled in which it furnishes an additional illustration, the word *πίστις* means, not an objective scheme of truth, but the subjective feeling of faith in the minds of men.

Others therefore, as Chrysos., Theophy., J. Capellus, Estius, understand *πίστις* to mean our faith; and they view the clause as declaring that Christ originates faith in our bosoms, or gives occasion by His work for the existence of faith in us, and also by His spirit strengthens the principle until it reach perfection. He supplies the materials and kindles the fire; He also fans it into a bright and durable flame. He sows the seed, and ripens it. And in defence of this view, appeal is made to Heb. ii. 10, where ἀρχηγὸν τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτῶν undoubtedly does mean author, or source of their salvation. But if this had been the idea which the Apostle meant to express, ἡμῶν must necessarily have been added to *πίστις* to indicate the seat of the faith spoken of. Besides there is another consideration which supplies an argument of equal strength against both the views already stated, viz., that the object of the Apostle in this verse is not to exhibit Christ's claim to our gratitude, but to hold Him up as a model for us to copy.

All the saints mentioned in the preceding chapter were patterns more or less worthy of imitation; but Christ is the great pattern of every excellence. He is the perfect model of every grace. The ancient saints were all possessed of faith, and they manifested their trust in God more or less perfectly; they laboured, they suffered, they died on account of their principles. But nothing that has been evinced among men of trust in God, can be compared with the life of Christ, who, amid the terrible scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary and the darkness which extorted from Him the fearful cry, "My God!" persevered in His work and executed the will of His Father: "He endured the cross, despising the shame." We may learn much from the ancient saints; but if we want a perfect model of faith, we must look to Christ. Unquestionably, therefore, if the words can be viewed as descriptive of the faith of Christ Himself, they will best fall in with the scope of the passage. An objection, however, to this interpretation readily suggests

itself, grounded upon the consideration that Christ is commonly exhibited as the object of faith, and not at all as the subject of it. But we must remember that *πίστις* in the whole of this passage has a more general signification than it bears in Romans. It means simply, trust in God, or faith in God's promises. Now Christ displayed this trust as really as the ancient saints, and in a far higher degree; and His sufferings and death were fitted to teach the same lessons as the martyrdom of any martyrs who have ever sealed their testimony with their blood. Now in this view what are the ideas we must attach to *ἀρχηγός* and *τελειωτής*? The former has been viewed as meaning leader of faith, in the sense of exhibiting an example of it. A perfectly similar use of the word is to be found in Micah i. 13, where *ἀρχηγός ἁμαρτίας αὐτῇ ἐστὶ τῇ θυγατρὶ Σιών* means "she is the ringleader in sin to the daughter of Zion." Then *τελειωτής*, which occurs in no other Greek writer, must be viewed as expressing the idea that He carried faith to perfection. He took the lead in regard to faith, and He exhibited the most perfect model of it. He was the leader and perfect specimen of both.

In complete accordance with this view is the description of Christ's conduct which follows, showing how His trust in God manifested itself: *ὅς ἀντὶ τῆς προκειμένης αὐτῷ χάριτος, ὑπέμεινε σταυρὸν*. Two modes of explaining the clause *ἀντὶ τῆς προκειμένης αὐτῷ χάριτος* have prevailed, springing from the different views taken of the preposition *ἀντὶ*. The more common acceptation of the word is, instead of, in the room of; and therefore many conceive the joy spoken of to be what Christ gave up or sacrificed when He prepared to encounter death. And some, as Gregory Naz. and Beza, conceive this joy to be the blessedness which He possessed in heaven before His incarnation, thus making the passage parallel to the statement in Philippians: "He was in the form of God, yet humbled Himself and became obedient to death." But the word *προκειμένης* does not at all comport with this view; for the felicity of Christ prior to His incarnation was not a thing offered to Him, but actually enjoyed. Others therefore, as Chrysostom, Theophylact, Capellus, Calvin,

Luther, still viewing the joy as something sacrificed, consider it to be the happiness which Christ might have enjoyed upon earth, if He had chosen to put away the cross from Him. But although this interpretation is quite consistent with the more common meaning of *ἀπὸ*, and also gives its proper force to *προκειμένης*, yet it introduces an idea quite foreign to the position and character of Christ: for what joy can we conceive a residence in this world fitted to impart to the Son of God, after His work was abandoned? What was temporal happiness to Him, or the possession of all the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them? The word *χαρὰ* carries the mind to something altogether different; and it is frequently used in the New Testament to denote spiritual and heavenly happiness (Matt. xxv. 21; John xvii. 13; 1 Pet. iv. 13). Therefore the bulk of modern interpreters have felt constrained to view this clause as descriptive, not of what Christ sacrificed in submitting to the cross, but of what He anticipated as the reward of His voluntary humiliation and endurance of a painful death. This exposition gives its full force to *χαρὰς*, is quite consistent with the import of *προκειμένης*, and only requires that *ἀπὸ* be understood in a sense not so common as the other meaning already stated. Yet *ἀπὸ* is very similarly used in the 16th verse of this very chapter, where we are told that Esau relinquished his birthright *ἀπὸ* *βρώσεως* *μῆς* for the sake of one meal. So the meaning of the clause under consideration may be, that Christ, for the sake of the joy set before Him as the reward of His sufferings, endured the cross. And the sentiment thus expressed finds a parallel in the very passage of Phil. ii. 8 appealed to in defence of the first view; for if, on the one hand, Christ's relinquishment of heaven to come down to this world be there mentioned, equally on the other it is stated that after His death, and on account of His death, He was highly exalted, and received a name above every name. The concluding clause of the verse before us, too, confirms the interpretation we have given; for it tells us that after Christ's endurance of the cross, He took His seat at the right hand of God. Now what is this but the obtaining of the joy whose an-

ticipation led Him to encounter the cross, and so disregard all the shame connected with it? He looked forward to a reward of His sufferings, and He was not disappointed. The phrase *ἠνέμασε σταυρὸν* is skilfully selected. It looks back to *ἀπ' ἀπομότης* in the first verse. We are to run with endurance, looking to Christ who endured even the cross. And we are not to be deterred by the derision or reproaches of men; for Christ despised the shame of the cross, which was considered the most opprobrious and disgraceful death. In the room of *ἐκάθισεν*, the best editions now read *κατάβηκεν*, as supported by the weightiest authorities. And this reading, as being a perfect tense, implies that not only has Christ taken His seat at God's right hand, but that He still sits there. The aorist must be translated, He sat down; but the perfect, He has taken His seat."

W. LINDSAY, D.D., *on Hebrews.*

Homiletical Breviaries.

No. CXOIV.

Subject: VISION OF GOD.

"Shall I see God."—Job xix. 26.

The exposition of the whole chapter will be found in *Homilist*, vol. x., Editor's series, p. 204. "See God!" There is a sense in which reason and the Bible assure us God cannot be seen. He is the Unapproachable, the Invisible. There is a solemn sense in which He can be seen, and in which He must be seen sooner or later; it is the sense of *conscious contact*, His presence realized as the one great reality, colouring and filling up the whole horizon of the soul. We make three remarks concerning this soul vision—I. It implies the HIGHEST CAPABILITY of a moral creature. The power to see the sublime forms of the material universe, is a high endowment. The power to see truth and to look into "the reason of things," is a higher endowment far; but

the power to see God, is the grandest of all faculties. To see Him who is the cause of all phenomena, the life of all lives, the force of all forces, the spirit and beauty of all forms,—this faculty the human soul has. Depravity, alas! has so closed it generally that there are none in their unregenerate state who see God. Jacob said, "God is in this place and I knew it not." We offer another remark concerning this soul vision—II. It involves the SUBLIMEST PRIVILEGE of a moral creature. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." To look with pure eyes at the perfection of all beauty, how transporting! to look with the eyes of filial love upon a Father all-loving, all-good, and glorious, this is heaven, the heaven of moral creatures. "In Thy presence is fulness of joy." Another remark we offer concerning this soul vision is—III. It includes the INEVITABLE DESTINY of a moral creature. All souls must be brought into conscious contact with Him, sooner or later "we must all appear before His judgment seat." Every soul must open its eye and so fasten it upon Him that He will appear everything to it, and all things else but shadows. The period of atheism, religious indifferentism, ends with our mortal life; the vision of God makes the heaven of the blessed and the hell of the damned. "Shall I see God." Yes, whatever else I may not see, I shall see Him. The material universe may melt away and become invisible; but He will be, and be in conscious contact with my spirit.

"Oh the hour when this material
Shall have vanished as a cloud,
When across the wide ethereal
All the invisible shall crowd."

No. CXCV.

Subject: CHRIST TRUE.

Master, we know that Thou art true."—MATTHEW xxii. 16.

This is the testimony, not of friends, but of enemies; they are the words of the Pharisees and the Herodians. But even the enemies of Christ are bound to give this testimony, "We know that Thou art true." Whatever the theoretical beliefs or moral characters of men may be, they are bound to say, "We know Thou art true." I. PHILOSOPHICALLY, "we know that Thou art true." First: In all Thou sayest about God, "we know Thou art true."

Thou hast revealed Him as a Person, a Spirit, a Father, and the sole Author of the universe; and our reason binds us to accept all this. Secondly: In all Thou sayest about *the universe*, "we know Thou art true." Thou hast taught that it had a beginning, that it originated with one Being who is eternal, and that it is sustained and controlled by the same power that created it. In all this our reason binds us to accept Thee as true. Thirdly: In all Thou hast said concerning *man*, we know Thou art true. Thou hast revealed man as a spiritual, responsible, fallen, existent, who can only be restored to purity and happiness by practical faith in Thyself. And in all this our reason binds us to accept Thee as true. Philosophically we are bound to accept Thee as our Teacher. For Thou givest the rational account of things, solvest the great problems of existence. II. ETHICALLY, "we know that Thou art true." First: In all that Thou hast said concerning our duty to *God*, "we know that Thou art true." He is the greatest Being, and Thou hast commanded us to reverence Him the most; He is the kindest Being, and Thou hast commanded us to thank Him the most; He is the best Being, and Thou hast commanded us to praise Him the most. We are bound by our moral constitution to accept this the teaching of our duty to God. Secondly: In all that Thou hast said concerning our duty to *others*, "we know that Thou art true." All that Thou hast enjoined is, that we should do unto others as we would have done unto us. This we are bound to accept. We cannot by any possibility reason ourselves into a denial of this obligation. III. PERSONALLY, "we know that Thou art true." We look at Thy life, and it illustrates and confirms the doctrine Thy lips declare. After the severest scrutiny, we are bound, like Pilate, to say, We can find no fault in Thee. Thy life answers to our highest ideal of goodness. Our loftiest conceptions of virtue are embodied in Thee. Thou art the true, the beautiful, the good. "Master, we know that Thou art true."

No. CXCVI.

Subject: PRACTICAL TRUST IN CHRIST THE HIGHEST HONOUR.

"Unto you therefore which believe He is precious."—1 PETER ii. 7.

"Unto you therefore who believe is the honour." Accepting this translation of Dr. Samuel Davidson and others, we use the

words to illustrate the fact that *practical trust in Christ is the highest honour*. I. Practical trust in Christ gives man the NOBLEST CHARACTER. What is true nobility or honour? Worldly wealth and power? No; there is nothing honourable in these things. *Disinterested love* is the spring and essence of a noble character, this is the soul of the hero. Where it is not, though a man be sage, statesman, poet, king, he is contemptible. Where it is, though a man be a pauper, he is invested with Divine dignity. *How does a man get this? By practically trusting in Christ—in no other way. This was Christ: self-sacrificing love made Him Christ. This is the glory of man, the glory that is revealed in us. II. Practical trust in Christ gives man the HIGHEST FELLOWSHIPS. Poor fallen men, morally degraded, have their societies that they regard honourable. But into what society does practical trust in Christ introduce them? First: Into the society of *sainted sages*—the great and good men of all lands and times. Secondly: Into the society of *holy angels*—the first-born of the Eternal, fleet and fiery, mighty and majestic ministers of the Eternal. Thirdly: Into the society of the great *God Himself*. Through Christ we have free access to Him; our fellowship is indeed with the Father. III. Practical trust in Christ gives man the SUBLIMEST POSSESSIONS. Fallen men count those honourable who call large estates or mighty empires their own. But such possessions have no honour in themselves, and are transient. Practical trust in Christ puts men in possession of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away.

No. CXC VII.

Subject: THE HIGHEST SERVICE OF MAN ON EARTH.

“For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.”—1 Cor. ix. 19.

The Apostle in this chapter confirms his teaching as to not putting a stumbling-block in a brother's way (chap. viii. 13), by his own example in not using his rights as an Apostle to win men to Christ. The subject that the passage suggests is this—the *highest service of man on earth*. The services of men on earth embrace a large variety. There is the service of the agriculturist, the mechanic, the mariner, the merchant, the scientist, the

legislator, the king, etc., etc. Men esteem these services as differing widely in respectability and honour; but the service referred to in the text stands infinitely above all. Four thoughts are suggested concerning this service. I. It is a service for the GAINING OF MEN. "That I might gain the more." The "more" what? Not the gaining the more wealth, fame, or pleasure; but the gaining of more men. Christ says, "Thou hast gained thy brother." There is a way of winning a man.* Morally man is lost; lost to himself, to the universe, to God, so far as the real purpose of his existence is concerned. He is lost in the sense in which a chronometer is lost that can no more keep time, that a harp is lost that can no more make music, that a ship is lost that can no more plough the ocean, that a human body is lost that is paralyzed. In all cases the materials are there; but they cease to fulfil the grand object and purpose of their existence. No work in the universe is higher than this—to *gain a man*, to recover him to the true spirit and mission of life. Another thought suggested is,—II. It is a service INDEPENDENT OF MEN. "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all." "Free from all men" means independent of all men. True, mean-natured, servile, flunkeyish, and sycophantish men have intruded themselves into this service, but they have no right here. They are morally disqualified for the discharge of its high functions. It is a service for independent men and for them only; men of independent convictions, independent spirit, brave heroic men, utterly regardless of the frowns or favours of society. "When it pleased God to reveal His Son in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." Oh, how this high service has been degraded by the crowds of craven and mercenary souls that have pushed themselves into it! I am "free from all men," says Paul. "I made *myself* servant." I was not made by human authority, I was not pushed into it by others, "I made myself." A man by God's grace must make himself for the work. No Church, no college, no bench of bishops, can make him a true servant here. Another thought suggested is,—III. It is a service for UNIVERSAL MAN. "Unto all." All men, not to any particular tribe, sect, or nation, but to all, rich and poor, high and low, cultured and rude. Every true minister feels himself to be not only the servant of his own little congregation, or of his denomination, but the

* See *Homilist*, Editor's Series, vol. x., p. 109.

servant of all. He preaches universal truths, advocates universal interests, and labours evermore for the common good.

CONCLUSION.—Oh, haste the time when this, the sublimest service of mankind, shall be cleared of all mean-natured souls, all mere ecclesiastical and denominational advocates; and when none but men endowed with the grand independency of an apostle shall presume to intrude themselves into a work so Divinely great and momentous.

Scientific Facts used as Symbols.

"Books of Illustration" designed to help preachers, are somewhat, we think, too abounding. They are often made up to a great extent of anecdotes from the sentimental side of life, and not always having a healthful influence or historic foundation. We find that preachers and hearers are getting tired of such. Albeit illustrations are needed by every speaker who would interest the people, and are sanctioned by the highest authority. Nature itself is a parable. Hence we have arranged with a naturalist who has been engaged in scientific investigation for many years, to supply the *Homilist* with such reliable and well-ascertained facts in nature, as cultured and conscientious men may use with confidence, as mirrors of morals and diagrams of doctrines.

Subject: The Ichneumon Tribe,—The Instinct and Operations of Error.

MORAL error has in it the instinct of mischief. It is bred of malice, works maliciously, and rears its progeny often on the unsuspecting and the unoffending. This is the law of its existence, and all its family follow it. In the history of its birth, its insidiousness, and its cowardice, it resembles the flies of the Ichneumon tribe. All the flies of the Ichneumon tribe are produced in the same manner, and owe their birth to the destruction of some other insect, within whose body they have been deposited, and upon whose vitals they have preyed till they came to maturity. As moral error attacks everything within its reach, so also do the flies. There is no insect whatever which they will not attack in order to leave their fatal present in its body; the caterpillar, the gnat, and even the spider, himself so formidable to others, is often made the unwilling fosterer of destructive progeny.

Subject: The Magpie,—Memory's Mode of Appropriation.

UNDERSTANDING is not essential to memory; the memory of many things not understood may be vital within us. For the fact is, that memory often grips and appropriates quite mechanically. The magpie appropriates the silver spoon, carries off the gold pencil and numbers of other articles, without knowing what they are or what to do with them, and stores them carefully away. Like the magpie the memory is a kleptomaniac. It cannot restrain itself from snatching and storing away all sorts of things. Hence the importance of keeping away from thoughts and scenes which it is undesirable for memory to accumulate. The magpie does not turn his medley of stores to much account. The memory does. It is constantly meddling with them, and they are all turned to either a good or evil purpose, and they endure for ever.

Subject: Animals and their Clothing,—The Plan on which Nature affords Assistance.

THERE are two ways in which Nature affords aid. One is by directly doing the particular thing required; the other is by giving or creating the power to perform it himself. And, as a rule, Nature refuses to do for a creature that which she has endowed him with the power to do for himself. In the arctic regions, where the cold of winter is intense, Nature has furnished most animals with an efficient protection against its influence. She has given its warm coat of fur to the bear, and has provided the whale and walrus with a stratum of blubber whose non-conducting powers enable these animals to retain their vital warmth in a medium which would seem to be inconsistent with life. All animals except man, in fact, are provided with more or less covering to enable them to resist cold; and accordingly we find that where they are naturally the inhabitants of countries exposed to considerable varieties of temperature, they appear to suffer very little inconvenience during the winter. Not so man. Unprovided with any natural

covering to shelter him from the chilling influence of a wintry atmosphere, he must have become, to a certain extent, a hibernating animal, had not his reason and his industry supplied him with clothing and fire to protect him from cold Nature, for this purpose, was content with bestowing on him the compensating faculty of reason, leaving the rest to his own ingenuity and diligence.

Subject: The Black Panther and the Natives—Reputation without Reality.

IN Java and some other of the great Indian islands there exists a black panther, which has gained,—it is difficult to say *how*,—the reputation of extraordinary ferocity and daring. He owes his fame solely to the imagination of the natives, and differs from his congeners in no single respect but the blackish colour of his skin. A skilful naturalist, who was for some years a resident in Java, relates that while botanizing in the field and jungles early in the day, he frequently roused the black panthers in their lairs. At first he was somewhat startled by the apparition of an animal of such terrible renown; but seeing him turn tail very quickly on his approach, he soon grew reassured and troubled himself no more at these rencontres than if he had met a cat or a dog.

There are plenty of "black panther" reputations in society. In literature and art, in politics and philanthropy, it is easy to find fine specimens of men enjoying a great reputation, which they owe solely to the credulity or ignorance of those of their fellow-men who have not the seeing eye to distinguish between the real and the spurious, or the intellectual capacity to test a vulgar renown by actual facts.

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

DEATH OF THE REV. CHARLES G. FINNEY.—One of the names most dear to our hearts, abiding in our memories, and reigning in our thoughts, is that of Charles G. Finney, who has left the dark and corrupt scenes of earth for the higher and purer realms of being. We read his "Lectures on Revivals" when at college, and the impressions they produced upon our young nature we shall never forget. His words came to us as a voice from eternity weighted with awful truths which evoked solemn feelings and started solemn trains of thought. He was not a "revivalist" in the modern sense, which means a mere sensationalist. He was a thinker, clear, vigorous, and profound. He was a man naturally gifted, and his whole nature was aglow with sympathy with souls and love to God.

The *New York Christian Union* says:—"The death of this eminent and beloved evangelist is an event of tender and thrilling interest, not only to the multitudes of men and women yet living who ascribe their conversion to Christ to his instrumentality, but to earnest-minded Christians of every denomination, who respected and venerated him for his work's sake. Mr. Finney was born in Warren, Conn., August 29th, 1792. Of his earlier years we are unable to speak; but it is probable that he enjoyed only those advantages of education which were common to New England boys

of that period. These advantages were so well improved, however, that he was admitted to the bar in Jefferson county, N. Y., at an early age. He began his work as an evangelist in 1824, in the interior of this State; and such was the power and earnestness with which he presented the claims of the Gospel that his labours were everywhere followed by extensive revivals of religion. Many of the most eminent Presbyterian pastors—for it was chiefly among Presbyterians that he laboured—looked with great distrust upon the 'new measures'—the protracted meetings, the inquiry meetings, the anxious seats, etc.,—which he introduced, and which, they feared, would result in filling the Churches with spurious converts. But the revivals increased in number and power until all Central and Western New York was moved, and converts were multiplied on every hand. Never since the days of Whitefield had the American Churches been so stirred. Mr. Nettleton's labours as an evangelist in some parts of New England had been greatly blessed; but he and his friends regarded Mr. Finney as a dangerous innovator. The controversy which sprang up under these circumstances among evangelical Christians, though natural enough in itself, was not characterized always by the best Christian spirit; and many of those who took an active part in it lived to see and ac-

knowledge the mistake they made in opposing Mr. Finney. In 1831-2, by invitation of Dr. Beecher and others of the Boston pastors, Mr. Finney went to that city, where his labours were greatly blessed. Not long afterwards, Oberlin College, a child of the revivals in which he had been so conspicuous, was founded, and in 1835 he accepted a professorship. Much of his time, however, was still spent in labours as an evangelist. He came more than once to this city, and preached to great crowds in the Broadway Tabernacle. A course of powerful Lectures on Revivals, delivered by him in that place, and reported by the late Dr. Joshua Leavitt, was published. In 1837 he became pastor of the Congregational Church in Oberlin; but even this did not withdraw him from his favourite work as an evangelist. He visited various places, and his preaching hardly ever failed of being followed by a revival. In 1848 he visited England, where he remained three years, his labours being greatly blessed. On his return he accepted the presidency of Oberlin College, a place which he held for many years, resigning at last only on account of the infirmities of age. His connection with the theological department, we believe, was terminated only by his death. He died on the 17th inst., of heart disease, at his home in Oberlin, beloved and venerated by the whole community. Mr. Finney was a Calvinist with some peculiar modifications. As a preacher he was remarkable for deep solemnity, and for the power with which he depicted the

great evil of sin and the need of a Saviour. His manner in the pulpit was grave, austere, and full of earnestness. No one could hear him and doubt his sincerity. He was a natural logician. Concede his premises, and you could not resist his argument. Though he was at times sarcastic, the solemnity of his discourses was relieved by no touch of humour. His one purpose seemed to be to make sinners feel their guilt, and to persuade them to flee from the wrath to come. His preaching often savoured more of the terrors of Sinai than of the love disclosed on Calvary. It has been happily said that he had a gift for uttering alarming truths so as to 'bring the people down upon their knees.' He generally influenced men through their fears, seldom won them by any personal attraction. His sternness made him intolerant of amusements, which he thought calculated to draw the soul away from the contemplation of Divine realities. Even the innocent game of croquet looked to him like a sin. But in spite of his limitations, he was a great and good man, and his name will long be remembered as that of a faithful, self-denying servant of Christ."

The *New York Independent*, at the close of a long sketch of the deceased, remarks:—"Intensely consecrated to the single purpose of saving men, he was yet a man of most genial nature and broad sympathies. The last years of his life have been marked by a quiet and restful cheerfulness, as he has laid aside, one after another, the responsibilities he has borne so long. The funeral was attend-

ed in the church where he had preached so many years; and although the students were mostly absent for the summer vacation, the seats and the aisles were filled, and nearly an hour was required for the people to pass in two lines by the coffin, for the last view of the peaceful and impressive countenance."

COMFORT IN PROSPECT OF DEATH. — When a person is going into a foreign land, where he never was before, it is comfortable for him to consider, "Though I am embarking to

an unknown country, yet it is a place where I have many friends, who are already settled there, so that I shall be, in fact, at home the instant I get thither." How sweet for a dying believer to reflect that, though he is yet a stranger in the world of spirits, still the world of spirits are no strangers to him! God, his Father, is there; Christ, his Saviour, is there; angels, his elect brethren, are there; saints, who got home before him, are there; and more will follow him every day.

SELF-SACRIFICE. — A life of sacrifice is a life of liberty, since it is a life of love, the liberty of imitating that Being who loves continually and cannot err. Self-sacrifice is among the highest requirements of the mighty taskmaster, puts us in possession of the very law of God, charges it with our everlasting weal. It is the final issue of the reverent faith which lifts a man out of himself, instills the loftiest principles, the conviction of a higher life. It imparts vitality and reality to the deep matters of the soul, faith in the divine future, faith in goodness, faith in the unseen ear, the all-pervasive presence, begets thoughts which are as portals to heaven, angels to guide and to warn. It suggests and likewise helps to realize aims which exalt a nation and an age. It confirms the virtue which outshines circumstances and defies temptation. It is associated with the poetry which floats through the universe, with the genius which allies itself with all goodness and all truth. It is indeed no other than the house of God and the very gate of heaven."—*Dr. MacCormac.*

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

YAYIN; OR, THE BIBLE WINE QUESTION. By Professors WATTS, WALLACE, and MURPHY, and Rev. WILLIAM WRIGHT, B.A. Belfast: William Mullan.

Whether the word "Yayin" means the unfermented or fermented juice of the grape, two things are certain, that the Bible wine had an intoxicating power, and the sooner it is voted out of society as a beverage the better. Alcohol has obtained a reigning power in this country, it governs politics, it determines elections, and creates cabinets: it is a ruthless despot, and spreads devastation through the length and breadth of our country. Sir Wilfrid Lawson said, "That the God of England is the god of bottles and battles." We honour every man who takes a stand against drunkenness, even although he makes mistakes in the interpretation of Scripture. We say this, though we are far enough from agreeing with all the arguments and methods of temperance advocates; and though some of them at times display a spirit intolerant and anti-Christian. Whether the ordinance of the Lord's Supper can be celebrated as well with unfermented as with fermented wine, appears to us a question not worth discussion. We think bread and water would do as well. At the same time, we think true temperance would gain nothing and lose much by voting it away from the sacramental table. The authors of this pamphlet are able men, distinguished scholars, and we have no doubt eminent saints. But we think they might have devoted their great powers in a way that would render more service to truth and humanity than in the production of this work: "The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life."

ROMANISM WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE OF THE SCRIPTURES AND FATHERS, AND FOUND WANTING. By Rev. W. PRESTON, M.A. London: The Book Society, 28, Paternoster Row.

Although W. Preston and many other clergymen argue strongly and zealously against Romanism, it is certain that Romanism is making

great progress in this country, and that the Church of England is one of its effective promoters. Those best informed assure us that there is scarcely a newspaper in England which has not on its staff writers of papal sympathies and aims. The "Tichborne trial," which increasing multitudes of our fellow-countrymen are beginning to feel was grossly unfair and tyrannical, was such a revelation of papal influence in this country as may well fill us with alarm. To those who require to be informed what the spirit and aim of Romanism are, we heartily recommend this work. The author writes with intelligence, for he has mastered the subject, and with earnestness, being deeply impressed with the errors of the system against which he contends.

A POPULAR COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT. By D. D. WHELOS, D.D., Vol. III. Acts to Romans. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 27, Paternoster Row.

"The series of volumes," says the author, "on the New Testament, of which this is the third, was undertaken by the author in accordance with a resolution of the Quadrennial General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America (the highest ecclesiastical legislature of the largest religious body in that country), directing that such a series should be prepared. So far as the book of Romans is concerned, far the greater number of later commentaries have accorded with the Augustinian theology. The notes in this volume coincide, upon the points most extensively discussed, rather with the theology prevalent in the primitive age, before the influence of Augustine was felt in the Western Church. It may be called also the theology of the great majority of the orthodox Church of all the Christian ages." We called the attention of our readers to the author's Exposition of the four Gospels some time since, and heartily recommended it. This volume heightens our judgment of him as an expositor—it is a very valuable Exposition on the Acts and the Romans.

INFANT BAPTISM, AND ADMISSION TO THE CHURCH. By H. L. M. London: Elliot Stock, Paternoster Row.

This pamphlet consists of three subjects, Baptism in Relation to its Proper Meaning; Infant Baptism in Relation to Christian Education; and Infant Baptism in Relation to Personal Confession of Faith. It contains a great many sensible thoughts on these subjects.

FOOD FOR FAITH; OR, REMARKABLE ANSWERS TO PRAYER. London: Book Society, Paternoster Row.

This is an interesting sketch of a pious woman.



A HOMILY

ON A

Wrong Social and Religious Idea.

"What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?"—MATT. viii. 29.

THERE are three several accounts of this singular miracle, varying in minute particulars, yet presenting substantially the same story. St. Matthew speaks of *two* afflicted men; St. Mark of *one*. A discrepancy? No. One of the men has a life history that extends beyond the healing word of Christ, and is recorded. In a crowd there may be men—and *the* man. So the narrator's eye sees the one most prominent. This man passes through a wonderful transformation. He was naked, or in rags;—he is clothed. His dwelling-place was among the tombs;—he has found a place at Jesus' feet. His strength of madness was so great that chains did not hold him;—he has come to so sweet and gracious a spirit, that he asks to follow the Lord. "In his right mind." That is emphatically a right mind that says, "Lord, I will follow Thee," etc.

But the Lord has a work for him, as for so many young

converts. Don't begin to preach just yet. A man from whom some demon of theft, or blasphemy, or intemperance has been cast out, is not quite ready for ordination. Go home, show piety there; tell your friends what great things God has done for you. It is sometimes more difficult to speak to a brother about personal religion, than to exhort a crowd—to be religious in the home sphere, than to profess religion among Christ's disciples.

I do not attempt to explain this miracle. We want more light on the whole subject of demoniacal possession, to understand what is meant by the devils leaving the bodies of men to enter into swine; but I do not see how, by less than such an overmastering power, creatures like sinners in this, that they love to have their own way, were driven on such a devil's way as this, down a steep place, to perdition.

But the demoniacal possession of men is not so extraordinary. There are respectable sins, quiet devils, that possess men, none the less deadly,—mean spirits of envy and covetousness and pride; but there are ferocious passions too. Much sin is madness—*e.g.* a brutalized man kicking his wife, clenching his huge fists at his children, boiling over with blasphemies and threats. There, altering the name, you have a Gadarene demoniac. A woman under the power of intemperance, her character dead, her influence dead, dwelling among the graves of past moralities and joys, etc.

Take two lines of thought suggested by the text.

I. A WRONG SOCIAL IDEA.

There is a feeling that finds expression in the cry of these evil spirits, echoed by the prayer of the people, asking Christ to leave them—that evil is not to be interfered with in its possession of humanity.

a. The devils acknowledge Christ. While men are saying, "Jesus, Son of Mary," "Nazarene," "Galilean,"

and a few, "Master," "Lord," these spirits confess Him Son of God. Intellectual knowledge will not save. (James ii. 19.)

b. They recognize the limit of their power. Sin is for a time. God sees in the ages to come its boundary line. Satan is to be bruised under the feet of God's saints; the devil to be cast into the lake of fire. Intimations of this there are, on the side of penal judgment, but more in the promises of grace and of our Lord's universal reign.

But in the meantime these devils seem to claim the right of possession to this man's soul. They have a lease of occupancy, which even the Lord of life is not to terminate "before the time." It was a miserable tenancy, the body of a maniac. A wretched dwelling-place, the tombs; a ghastly society, the dead! and worse, the bodies of swine. Yet does it seem as though evil spirits go out of the body to a state more miserable.

"Beyond the lowest depths, a lower deep."

But have we not here a wrong social idea, that evil is to exist unmolested anywhere even for a time?

1. Men dwell in filthy and degraded conditions. They crowd together in alleys and courts. They love the darkness rather than the light, etc.

If you seek to bring the daylight into these dark places of the earth, if you touch them towards a moral or social elevation, or enter with the strong hand of law, they perhaps meet you with a growl or a roar—"Leave us alone, what have we to do with thee?"

2. Men get their living by distilling poisons, by adulterating articles of food, to ruin men's bodies; they pen and print and publish immoral literature to the ruin of men's souls; they open haunts of evil and dig pits for the unwary. It is their living. Interfere with them, and you hear this cry, "What have we to do with thee?"

A large mass of society is indifferent to religion. Visit them, speak to them of God, of His law, His love, His claim to our worship and service, they resent your well-meant endeavours, and say, "Go to your church, keep your Sabbath; we respect your liberty, respect ours."

It is possible to adopt unwise and injudicious methods in our attempts to do good, etc.

But we cannot, must not, dare not, leave evil alone.

1. Sin in society does not leave us alone. It pollutes the atmosphere we breathe, it endangers our life and the lives of those dear to us. It mars our happiness. We must meet the mighty agencies of aggressive evil and the negations of all good that chill the air and wither the beauty of goodness, with agencies of aggressive truth, with lives of holiness and righteousness, and the sunshine of love. War for war, stroke for stroke; we have part in the incessant conflict waged in this part of God's universe; and woe to the sleeper, the recreant, the coward.

2. Every man who has influence must use it, and does in fact use it. If we know more than our fellows, we are bound to teach. If rich among the starving, we ought to feed them. If we possess the divinest truth, and others are in ignorance, "No man liveth to himself." The light must shine into the darkness; and we have positive command, and the example of our Lord. "The Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil." He who came to seek and to save must meet all forms of evil, and come across the track of its violent and ferocious spirits.

Christ could not leave even devils alone. He was tender to the sinner, but inexorable in severity to the sin. His very presence was enmity to all evil. So must ours be, though our interference be an offence, and our best-meant efforts resented as an intrusion into the sphere of

that personal freedom man claims for himself. There is no liberty anywhere to be or do evil.

II. A WRONG RELIGIOUS IDEA.

That Christ comes to torment men.

Truth in the charge, as there is truth in all dangerous lies. Men do not follow a phantom far. A lie that is nothing but a lie can never live.

1. He did inflict loss on these evil spirits, He cast them out. They were having a comfortable time for devils, and He sent them into the swine.

2. The Gadarenes. They lost their property. Put the case: "Shall two maniacs, wretched, pitiable, dangerous, objects of compassion and of terror—shall two human lives be restored to society—shall one soul be reclaimed for God, or shall two thousand swine die?" The swine will have it. Their estimate of the comparative value of humanity and worldly good, is not Christ's. The Satanic spirit is devoid of love; it torments the wretched. The selfish spirit will leave them in torments; it is Satanic too.

Is this estimate confined to the era of our Lord's earthly life, and to Galilee of the Gentiles?

Do not men stand on their rights now, and save their own, by leaving men in misery, and by inflicting suffering upon their fellows.

Instance: Ruin wrought by speculation.

The widow and the orphan made houseless.

3. In *saving* the life. Take the case of young converts at the outset of the religious life; there is a giving up for Christ, a suffering the loss of many things.

The sword sent into the household in heathen lands.

4. In *sanctifying* the life, God takes away child, wife, money, health.

But I denounce as a lie in its length and breadth the assertion that our Lord came into this world to torment

men. His whole mission was one of blessing. It was love. Witness Christian experience of joy and peace in believing, glorying in the cross. Ask John, lying on Jesus' breast, whether Christ came to torment him. Ask James, dying for His sake, whether he has lost by following the Master. Find Paul, bruised by stones, cast out as dead; seek him in the innermost prison at Philippi; meet him on his way to execution, and hear him sing in exultant rapture: "I reckon that the sufferings," etc.

"I know in whom I have believed," etc.

We followers of Jesus give countenance to the impression that religion is a sad and melancholy thing, because we have too little religion.

But is the evil life so happy? Is the man who stakes all on the world without sorrow? Are there no thorns in his pillow, no withering leaves in his crown, no cares in his toils?

Young men go in for a life of pleasure. Pleasure! And they will write on it "Vanity;" and God, "Sorrow, disappointment, rottenness, death."

In conclusion:—Jesus Christ is near. Because He comes at the outset to inflict temporary loss, these people do not look at the men He saves, do not wait to hear the object of His mission, but pray Him to depart out of their coasts.

They did this in plain speech; we may do it by neglect and silent rejection. What is inattention to Christ's blessed invitation, failure to watch over and deepen religious impressions, but beseeching Him to go away?

Choose. He is near! Will you say to Him, "Come," or "Depart?"

He will echo your own words in deeper and more weighty tones—*now* and at the *Judgment*.

Norwood.

W. K. LEE.

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Psalms.

Our Purpose.—Many learned and devout men have gone philologically through *THIS TANSILIN*, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal *hermeneutics* of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough *homiletic* treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we have committed ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

Our Method.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1) The *HISTORY* of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2) *ANNOTATIONS* of the passage. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase, or allusion that may occur.—(3) The *ASSEMBLY* of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is amongst the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4) The *HOMILETICS* of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavour so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately deduced, as to suggest such thoughts, and indicate such sermonising methods, as may promote the productivity of modern pulpit ministrations.

Subject: A Portrait of a Genuine Penitent.

"Have mercy upon me, O God," etc.—PSALM li. 1-19.

HISTORY.—This is called a psalm of David, and there is no good reason for doubting its authorship. We do not think, with De Wette, Rosenmüller, and others, that the prayer in the 18th verse, "Build Thou the walls of Jerusalem," etc., is sufficient to show that the author must have lived in the time of the Babylonish exile, which was ages after David's death; and that therefore he could not have been the author. For those words might have been inserted by another hand, or might have a spiritual signification. As a whole, it has the impress of David's genius, the aroma of his soul. The title states too the occasion of its composition "When Nathan the prophet came unto him." Nathan came to him (2 Sam. xii. 1-13) in relation to one of David's greatest crimes, nay, to the double crime of adultery and murder. The guilt of these tremendous crimes now stung him into moral agony. It is dedicated to the chief musician, which indicates, perhaps, that whilst it is the expression of personal emotions, it is fit for general use.

ANNOTATIONS: Ver. 1.—"*Have mercy upon me, O God.*" The only relief that a sin-convicted soul can hope for, is in the mercy of God. "*According to Thy lovingkindness.*" Let Thy mercy to me be according to Thy unbounded beneficence, Thine infinite compassion. "*According unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies.*" A repetition of the

same idea. "*Blot out my transgressions.*" Some say the allusion here is to the erasure of a debt, others to the cleansing of a vessel, the wiping away of all stains. The subsequent verse inclines me to the latter opinion.

Ver. 2.—"*Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*" "Thoroughly wash me from my iniquity and from my sin. Cleanse me. The first word in Hebrew is the infinitive or imperative of a verb meaning to increase or multiply, but often used adverbially in the sense of plentifully, abundantly. The verb in the first clause properly denotes the act of washing the garments, as distinguished from that of bathing the body. See Numbers xix. 19. The image here presented, therefore, is the same as in Jude 23, sin being represented as a stain and the grace of God as purifying water."—*Alexander.*

Ver. 3.—"*For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.*" "For of my transgressions I am conscious, and my sin is ever present before me."—*Delitzsch.* How vividly Nathan brought this sin to his memory! (2 Sam. xii. 1.) So vividly that it continued before his mind and heart. His great sin seems to have been buried for some time; but at the words of Nathan it sprang from the grave of oblivion and became a terrible and ever-present reality.

Ver. 4.—"*Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil is Thy sight.*" What does he mean? Had he not sinned both against Uriah and his wife? Yes; but the sin against them was but secondary and shadowy. All true domestic and social laws are God's laws, not man's; and therefore any transgression of them is a sin against God. "*That Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest.*" The meaning is, I acknowledge this, that Thou mayest be just.

Ver. 5.—"*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*" Does this mean what the old theologians call original sin? Does it mean that he was constitutionally sinful—sinful in his very nature? This, in philosophy, is nonsense; in religion, it is blasphemy. All it means is, that from the commencement of his moral history he formed a sinful character or condition of soul.

Ver. 6.—"*Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*" The idea seems to be, that whilst the principles of falsehood and depravity are deeply rooted within me, nothing but truth and purity can satisfy the Almighty. "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts," etc.

Ver. 7.—"*Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*" What, in botany, this hyssop is, nobody knows; nor does it matter. The idea is purification.

Ver. 8.—"*Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice.*" The "bones,"—the energies which Thou hast crushed—may be restored. A sense of guilt saps the constitution

of man and enervates his power. Such is the connection between the mind and the body, that an agonized mind can break up the physical health of the most robust organization.

Ver. 9.—“*Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.*” The meaning of this seems to be, Overlook my sins, blot them out of Thy memory.

Ver. 10.—“*Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*”

“Create in me a clean heart, Elohim,
And renew a steadfast spirit in my inward part.”

—*Delitzsch.*

A clean heart and a settled spirit, a spirit settled in truth and God, are the urgent needs of a sinner. But these must come from God. He must “create” the pure heart, He must “renew” the settled spirit of goodness.

Ver. 11.—“*Cast me not away from Thy presence.*” This means, Do not reject me, do not cast me off as worthless. “*And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.*” Do not leave me to myself. Thy Spirit is not entirely gone from me, for I feel it quickening my conscience, inspiring me to an improved life. Take not this spirit from me.

Ver. 12.—“*Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation.*” His guilt had robbed him of all spiritual joy; he was cheerless and sad, full of painful memories and terrible forebodings. He prays for the restoration of the old joy. “*And uphold me with Thy free spirit.*” Thy willing spirit. Sin endangers and enslaves, hence the prayer for God to uphold and make free.

Ver. 13.—“*Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.*”—Unto Thee shall return. Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways. Here begins the expression of his thankfulness, or rather a description of the way in which he is determined to express it. The word supplied at the beginning points out the connection of the verses. Then, when these petitions have been answered, I will teach. The form of the Hebrew verb denotes a strong desire and a settled purpose, as if he had said, I am resolved to teach transgressors, rebels, traitors, apostates. Thy way, as well the ways in which Thou walkest as the ways in which Thou requirest us to walk—the course of Providence and the course of duty.—*Alexander.*

Ver. 14.—“*Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness.*” Bloodguiltiness—in the margin, “bloodiness.” The phrase is perhaps used to indicate the intensity of the guilt. David had caused the blood of Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, to be shed. He feels the enormity of the crime, and prays for deliverance.

Ver. 15.—“*O Lord, open Thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise.*” Guilt has closed my lips, so that I cannot celebrate Thy

praises with a joyous heart. Remove my guilt, and then my lips will open and speak out Thy praise.

Ver. 16.—“*For Thou desirest not sacrifice; Thou delightest not in burnt offering.*” By sacrifice is meant mere material oblation, apart from a true devotional spirit. Such the Almighty does not desire. “*Else would I give it.*” This phrase,—in the margin, “that I should give it,”—expresses the idea, were such an offering wished, I would give it.

Ver. 17.—“*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.*” The idea is, a truly penitential soul is a sacrifice that Thou wilt accept and not despise.

Ver. 18.—“*Do good in Thy good pleasure unto Zion: build Thou the walls of Jerusalem.*” This is figurative language, and it means in general, Let Thy religion prosper.

Ver. 19.—“*Then shalt Thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.*” The idea here seems to be, Let true religion spread amongst the people, and then ceremonial sacrifices will be acceptable to Thee.

ARGUMENT.—This psalm consists of two parts—a prayer and a vow. In the first, he prays to be forgiven and restored to the Divine favour (ver. 1-12). In the second, he shows how he means to testify his gratitude (ver. 13-19).—*Alexander.*

HOMILETICS.—This psalm may be regarded as the portrait of a genuine penitent. Here a human soul, smitten with a sense of its guilt, and profoundly contrite, is laid open before us. Two general subjects are presented to our notice. First: The favours this penitent implores; and secondly, the arguments this penitent employs.

I. THE FAVOURS this penitent EMPLORES. Deep and agonising is his cry to Heaven, but for what? For four things,—

First: *Deliverance from sin.* “Blot out my transgressions.” “Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.” SIN. What a little word, but what an enormous thing! It always implies *four* things:—the existence of law,—the means of knowing law, for where the means of knowing the law are not possessed, there can be no sin,—the power of obeying or disobeying the law, for where this power does not exist, there can be no sin,—and an actual violation of law. All these things were involved in David’s sin. In this psalm sin is presented in two aspects: (1) As an act, “My transgressions.” (a) As an act entirely

personal, "I have done this evil." "Conscience," says the immortal Robertson, "ever speaks thus." It was not the guilt of them that tempted you: they have theirs; but each, as a separate agent, has his own degree of guilt. Yours is your own,—the violation of your own, and not another's, sense of duty,—solitary, awful, unshared, adhering to you alone of all the spirits of the universe." All your arguments for the dogma that man is the creature of circumstances—conscience, when it springs to a sense of its guilt, tears to pieces in an instant, and tramples in the dust. It says, *I have sinned*. It is my sin, not the sin of my circumstances, my organization, or my tempters. How a convicted conscience detaches man from all society, all surroundings, insulates him, and causes him to stand *alone* before the burning eye of infinite purity!

(b) As an act relating *directly to God*. "Against Thee only." Before a sin-awakened conscience, God is everything. He fills the whole horizon, and beams forth, radiating with all the effulgence of His holiness. It sees God. All violations of our own constitution, all outrages on the rights of others, are sins against God. "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned."

(c) As an act *ever rememberable*. "My sin is ever before me." A man's sin may, as in the case of David, through absorbing worldly engagements and sensual indulgences, be laid in the grave of oblivion for a brief space; but when conscience is touched with a sense of its guilt, no sealed stones, no ponderous mountains will keep it there, it will spring to life, never to disappear again. "My sin is ever before me." What a prospect! To have the eyes of conscience fastened evermore on one's sin! What spectacle is more horrid, more ghastly, more abhorrent than this?

In this psalm sin is presented (2) As a *condition*. "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

This, as has been already asserted, does not necessarily mean original sin in the theological sense, but the generating of depravity at the commencement of our moral history. Such are the corrupting influences that surround the life into which

we are born, that as soon as we begin to act as moral agents, we are turned into the wrong course—imbibe those wrong opinions and construct those unvirtuous habits that constitute the basis of a character which inclines us in after years to evil, and evil only. Had the writer meant by these words that sin was part of his conscience, wrought into the very texture of his being, he could not have done what he does here—grieve over it as a moral enormity. He means to say, I have not only committed this great crime which the prophet Nathan has brought home to my conscience, but I have been wrong from the earliest period of my moral existence. Ay, sin exists, not merely as an act, but as a condition or mood of the soul. As a condition of soul, it is like the electric element that pervades the atmosphere; as an act, it is only that electric element breaking out in thunder and flaming in lightning.

Now, deliverance from this sin is what is implored; and this deliverance is spoken of as a blotting out, a washing, a cleansing. The idea suggested is, that closely as sin may adhere to us, deeply rooted as it may be in us, though it took possession of us in our earliest childhood, it is not part of ourselves; it can be separated from us; it is not ingrained, it can be washed away. There are moral influences on this earth to cleanse souls—the influences of grace and truth, brought through Jesus Christ.

(To be continued.)

· **PSYCHOLOGY.**—Psychology as a science is natural and demonstrable as any other, takes account of man's inner nature, the good, the beautiful, and the true. So far from self-observation being impracticable, everything even that material science by some thought alone accessible, comes to us through the medium of the inner, the unseen life. Psychology, rightly understood, resumes all other sciences, for it is the science of the living soul. It is intimately connected with religion, of which it is the sure and certain ally, and vain are the efforts which have been made, or ever shall be made, to deary it.—*Dr. MacCormac.*

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Job.

The Book of Job is one of the grandest sections of Divine Scripture. It has never yet, to our knowledge, been treated in a purely Homiletic method for Homiletic ends. Besides many learned expositions on the book found in our general commentaries, we have special exegetical volumes of good scholarly and critical worth; such as Drs. Barnes, Wemyss, Mason Goode, Noyes Lee, Delitzsch, and Herman Hedwick Bernard: the last is in every way a masterly production. For us, therefore, to go into philology and verbal criticism, when such admirable works are available to all students, would be superfluous, if not presumption. Ambiguous terms, when they occur, we shall of course explain, and occasionally suggest an improved rendering; but our work will be chiefly, if not entirely, Homiletic. We shall essay to bring out from the grand old words those Divine verities which are true and vital to man as man in all lands and ages. These truths we shall frame in an order as philosophic and suggestive as our best powers will enable us to do; and this in order to help the earnest preachers of God's Holy Word.

Subject: The Transcendent Greatness of God.

"Dead things are formed from under the waters," etc.—Job. xvi. 5-14.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—It is worthy of remark that Wemyss and others regard the whole of this chapter as a continuation of Bildad's address.

We think the reasons for such an idea are very insufficient, nor is it of any real importance, whether Bildad or Job uttered the words.

Ver. 5.—"*Dead things are formed from under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof.*" The speaker, if the patriarch, here enters on a grand representation of God, probably to show that his views of the majesty of the Almighty were not inferior to those propounded by Bildad in the preceding chapter. This verse has been variously translated. "The souls of the dead tremble (the places) under the waters and their inhabitants."—*Magee*. "The place where the giant monsters of the deep are formed, that which is beneath the waters, and the inhabitants thereof."—*Bernard*. "The shades tremble from beneath, the waters and their inhabitants."—*Barnes*. The "dead things" mean the shades of the dead, or departed spirits that dwell in Sheol, the great world of disembodied spirits. This great world is represented as being under the waters. The waters meaning perhaps the subterranean abyss. Who can tell the multitudes that people this unseen world? Conquerors, tyrants, etc., are there.

Ver. 6.—"*Hell is naked before Him, and destruction hath no covering.*"

"Hell," Hebrew, Sheol; Greek, *ᾗδης*, Hades. The idea is, that the mighty world of disembodied spirits lies naked to the eye of God.

"The eye of God is in every place."

Ver. 7.—“*He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.*” “He stretcheth out the north over a void; He hangeth the earth upon nothing.”—*Dr. Bernard.* Job’s idea seems to have been, that the earth hung in space, and had nothing to support it: as Milton expresses it, “The earth, self-balanced, on her centre hung.” Many of the ancients had the same astronomic notion; and modern science could scarcely reject the sublime description here given.

Ver. 8.—“*He bindeth up the waters in His thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them.*” “That is, He collecteth the waters into the clouds, as it were, in bottles or vessels which do not let them fall till He is pleased to send them drop by drop upon the earth.”—*Kitto.* “He hath bound the waters in a garment.”

Ver. 9.—“*He holdeth back the face of His throne, and spreadeth His cloud upon it.*” A similar expression we have to this in Ps. xviii. 11: “He made darkness His secret place; His pavilion round about Him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.” “Clouds and darkness are round about Him,” etc.

Ver. 10.—“*He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end.*” The ancients seem to have believed that only the northern hemisphere enjoyed the light of the sun, and that all below the horizon was in perpetual darkness. They also supposed that the earth was surrounded by water, upon which the concave of heaven seemed to rest; and hence the idea of a circular bound, drawn as it were by compasses at the extreme verge of the celestial hemisphere, where the light was supposed to end and the darkness to begin.

Ver. 11.—“*The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at His reproof.*” By the pillars of heaven he probably means the mountains. Amongst the ancients, Atlas was considered one of the pillars of heaven.

Ver. 12.—“*He divideth the sea with His power, and by His understanding He smiteth through the proud.*” By His power He clothed the sea, and by His understanding smote He its pride.

Ver. 13.—“*By His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens.*” Whether the word Spirit here is to be taken as synonymous with wisdom or breath, it scarcely matters. In any case it means that God Himself garnished the heavens. The next clause shows this: “*His hand hath formed the crooked serpent.*” The serpent here is supposed to refer to the heavenly constellation called the dragon, a constellation that has eighty brilliant stars.

Ver. 14.—“*Lo, these are parts of His ways: but how little a portion is heard of Him! but the thunder of His power who can understand!*” “Lo, these are but outlines of His ways, and how small a matter hath here been heard of Him.”—*Bernard.* The idea is, that what is seen of God in nature is wonderful, but what comes not within the range of human vision is unutterably great.

HOMILETICS.—The subject of these words is the *Transcendent Greatness of God*; and there are two facts illustrative of this.

I. God appears incomprehensibly great in THAT PORTION OF THE UNIVERSE THAT IS BROUGHT UNDER HUMAN OBSERVATION.

Here He is referred to,— {

First: In connection with the *world of disembodied spirits*. "Dead things are formed from under the waters and the inhabitants thereof. Hell is naked before Him, and destruction hath no covering." This great world stands naked to His eye, He sees into the depths of every separate soul, it has no covering. Although these disembodied spirits seem to be under the waters, deep beneath unfathomable oceans, He sees them, and they tremble before Him; "the shades tremble from beneath." Mighty conquerors, ruthless despots, savage tyrants, that kept their generations in awe, here tremble before Him. In Homer's *Iliad* there is a passage somewhat similar to this, but scarcely equal in sublimity. Pope's is a pretty fair translation of it—

"Deep in the dismal regions of the dead
Th' infernal monarch reared his horrid head,
Leaped from his throne, lest Neptune's arm should lay
His dark dominions open to the day,
And pour in light on Pluto's drear abodes,
Abhorred by men and dreadful e'en to gods."

So great is God, that all these ghastly spirits, the ruthless tyrants of past ages, tremble before Him down in abyssmal Sheol.

Here He is referred to,—

Secondly: In connection with this *terracqueous globe*. "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." "From passages like this," says Dr. Barnes, "occurring occasionally in the classic writers, it is evident that the true figure of the earth had early engaged the attention of men, and that occasionally the truth on this subject was before their minds, though it was neither brought into a system nor sustained there by sufficient evidence to make it an article of established belief."

"In this couplet," says Dr. J. M. Good, "we have one of the doctrines of the earliest Idumean or Arabian cosmology; and which, issuing perhaps from this quarter, was propagated in every direction, and received as a popular tenet, in subsequent ages, throughout Greece and Rome. The north, or north pole, is here used synechdochically for the heavens at large; the inhabitants of Idumea knowing nothing of the south, but believing it to be altogether uninhabited and uninhabitable; and in the language of Ovid *ponderibus librata suis*—"self-poised and balanced." By what means it was, in their opinion, self-poised and hung upon nothing, we find amply explained in Lucretius—

"That this mass terrene might hold unmoved
The world's mid regions, its excess of weight,
From its own centre downward, gradual ceased,
And all below a different power assumed
From earliest birth a nature more attuned
To the pure air in which it safe reposed.
Hence earth to air no burden proves, nor deep
Grinds it with pressure; as the limbs no load
Feel to the body, to the neck no weight
Th' incumbent head, nor e'en the total form
Minutest labour to the feet below."

This globe, with its circumference of twenty-four thousand miles and a ponderousness which baffles all human appreciation, He hangs upon nothing—nothing but His own will. The oceans of water which seem to encircle it, He bindeth up in thick clouds, and those clouds seem to conceal the effulgence of His throne. Then the waters that roll over the globe, to them He hath set a limit. To the proud billows He hath said, "Hither shalt thou come, and no farther." Milton has indicated the limits that the Infinite has put to all things—

"Then stayed the fervid wheels, and in His hand
He took the golden compasses prepared
In God's eternal store, to circumscribe
This universe and all created things;
One foot He centred, and the other turned
Round through the vast profundity obscure,
And said, 'Thus far extend thy bounds,
This be thy just circumference, O world.'

Here He is referred to,—

Thirdly: In connection with the *starry universe*. "By His spirit He hath garnished the heavens." W. Herschell observed one hundred and sixteen thousand stars pass the feeblest telescope in one quarter of an hour. But what are they? Only a few drops to the ocean. Who moulded and burnished those? Who garnished those heavens? "He," the Almighty One.

Now, these are only "*parts of His ways*;" These nether regions of disembodied spirits, this terraqueous globe suspended "on nothing," those oceans of waters that roll around and over its surface, those heavens crowded with innumerable globes of fiery brilliancy—He has to do with them all. He is not like the engineer that has finished the machine and left it, or the architect that has built the edifice and left it. He is in every part of the machinery He has constructed, in every part of the great house He has built. These old Arabians were wiser, more philosophic than modern scientists. They did not ascribe the phenomena and operations of the universe, as it appeared to them, to laws which are mere abstractions of the brain, but to the force, skill, and goodness of an all-sufficient Personality. But the other fact in the passage illustrative of the greatness of God in that portion of the universe which is brought under human observation, and in which God is seen, is—

II. INSIGNIFICANT COMPARED WITH THOSE PARTS THAT ARE UNDISCOVERED IN IMMENSITY. "Lo, these are parts of His ways: but how little a portion is heard of Him? but the thunder of His power who can understand?" The great earth hanging on nothing, unfathomable oceans of water sailing in clouds and surging on shores, the spirit-realms of Sheol, and the myriad-starred heavens are only "*parts of His ways*," mere outlines, dim sketches, tiny specimens of what lies out of sight, and where the Infinite works as He does here. Here He is only heard as a faint whisper; away through the vast unknown He is heard in thunder. God appears infinitely great to us as He operates in the known.

But what is the known to the unknown? What is one atom to all the particles that compose the solar system?

CONCLUSION.—We may conclude with two remarks concerning God's greatness.

First: God's greatness is not inconsistent with His attention to little things. He bindeth up the waters as well as garnisheth the heavens, and controls innumerable systems. Even amongst men the ignorance or the neglect of little things is no indication of greatness. The greater the man, as a rule, the more interested in minor matters. But to the Infinite there is nothing great or small. He is not so absorbed with the immensities as to overlook the infinitesimals, not so baffled with the multiplicity of engagements as to suspend His interest in the minutest part of His universe,—

“ He sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish or a sparrow fall.”

Secondly: God's greatness is a vital subject for human thought. Here, as well as in numerous other parts of the Holy Book, the subject is urged on human attention. Every part of nature, and every paragraph of Holy Writ, ring this subject into the ears of men. Why this? No subject is so soul-quickenings. Thoughts on the Great Living One are life-giving. No subject is so humbling. As we think of Him, our egotism wanes away, we feel morally absorbed in the Infinite. This subject drinks up the soul.

“ The more Thy glories strike my eyes,
The lower I shall lie;
Thus, while I fall, my joy shall rise
Immeasurably high.”

THE WORLD A PARADISE.—The world is yet an Eden, hues golden and purple are still seen, ravishing melodies are yet heard. All nature, indeed, is a revealing, a ceaseless declaration of the else unutterable excellences of God. And each man is an Adam, undergoing apprenticeship in the garden of life. Sin as erst is still the only fall, its destruction our paradise regained.—*Dr. MacCormac.*

Sermonic Glances at the Gospel of St. John.

As our purpose in the treatment of this Gospel is purely the development, in the briefest and most suggestive form, of Sermonic outlines, we must refer our readers to the following works for all critical inquiries into the author and authorship of the book, and also for any minute criticisms on difficult clauses. The works we shall especially consult are:—"Introduction to New Testament," by Bleek; "Commentary on John," by Tholnek; "Commentary on John," by Haugstenberg; "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels," by Westcott; "The Gospel History," by Ebrard; "Our Lord's Divinity," by Liddon; "St. John's Gospel," by Costenness; "Doctrine of the Person of Christ," by Dörner; Lange; etc., etc.

Subject: Divine Providence.

"These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as He taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on Him; for His hour was not yet come."—JOHN viii. 20.

EXPOSITION: Ver. 20.—"*These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as He taught in the temple.*" Jesus is still in the temple, and continuing His discourse, notwithstanding repeated interruptions. Indeed the interruptions and the interrogations, captions as most of them were, seem to stimulate utterances of truth which otherwise, perhaps, the world would never have heard. He was in that part of the temple called the "treasury." This was the court of the women, in which there were thirteen chests into which the worshippers cast their offerings. In this court there were the great chandeliers which had been lighted at the feast, and from which Jesus had just drawn an illustration of Himself as the "light of the world." What courage Christ had, to stand in this most public place on the most public occasion, in order to utter truths that struck at once against the secular interests and religious prejudices of the people.

HOMILETICS.—The words present to us the subject of *Divine Providence*, and suggest two thoughts concerning it.

I. THAT IT EXERTS A RESTRAINING POWER ON WICKED MEN. "No man laid hands on Him." Why? Jewish rage was almost at its height. The Sanhedrim and many of the people were thirsting for His blood, the thirst was becoming intense. Why did they not lay hands upon Him now? They neither lacked the disposition, the muscular power, nor the public co-operation. Why? "His hour was not yet come." There

was a subtle mysterious power on their spirits, holding them back; there was an invisible hand restraining them. In relation to this restraining power of God's moral government of the world, three remarks may be offered.

First: It is *not always a matter of consciousness*. Sometimes, it may be, men feel that they are reined in, that there is a curb on them, some mysterious power preventing them from doing what they most fervently desire. History presents us with monsters that have felt themselves like caged lions. But as a rule the restraining force is so subtle, so delicate, that men are unconscious of it.

Secondly: It *interferes not with human freedom*. A man is not free from the guilt of a wrong act because he has not the power or the opportunity to embody it. The guilt is in the desire, the volition. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." At first sight it seems morally absurd that God should restrain a man from committing a crime, and yet hold him guilty for it. The solution is here: The crime is in the wish.

Thirdly: It is an *incalculable advantage to the race*. What was in the Alexanders, the Caligulas, the Napoleons, the Lauds, and the Bonners, is for the most part in every unregenerate soul. Were there no restraining hand upon depraved hearts, all social decency, order, peace, and enjoyment would be at an end. The world would be a Pandemonium. We rejoice that He who reigns in the ocean and keeps it within bounds, holds in the passions and impulses of the depraved soul. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of waters: He turneth it whithersoever He will."

Another thought concerning Divine Providence suggested is:—

II. That it HAS SETTLED PERIODS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EVENTS. "For His hour was not yet come." Christ seemed practically to recognize the fact that there was a particular hour or crisis for everything He had to do. There was an hour for the commencement of His miracles, an hour for

His baptism, an hour for His death. His death was the hour of hours. "Father, the hour has come." God has appointed scenes in space and appointed seasons in duration for all things that occur in His vast dominion. Nothing He allows to be done in one scene that is intended to occur in another, nothing in one season that is fixed for another. There is a season for everything. "To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven." Every orb that rolls through immensity has a point it is bound to reach, and a certain fixed period and "hour;" it is never behind its time. So it is not only in the epochs and eras of human history, but in all the events of individual life. "Man's decrees and purposes," says a modern author, "often fail from the fickleness of his own mind, from his want of foresight, and from his want of power. When the period contemplated for carrying them into effect arrives, he has already, perhaps, laid them altogether aside; or, if they are still entertained, he finds, it may be, the circumstances unfavourable to the carrying out of his design. It is altogether otherwise with the designs of the Almighty. When His set time for working comes, not all the power in the universe can stay His hand. When we first look abroad, indeed, upon the busy field of human affairs, and observe the numerous actors upon the scene, all moving energetically to and fro, planning, arranging, adjusting the course of things, we may be tempted for the moment to imagine that destiny itself is in their hands. But when we have looked a little longer and have seen all their schemes deranged, and all their contrivances thwarted, and all their devices turned to foolishness, and a result emerging the very opposite, it may be, of what they had been labouring to produce, we begin to discover that there is a power out of sight mightier than all—One whose purposes are from everlasting to everlasting, whose counsel shall stand, and who will do all His pleasure."

Germs of Thought.

Subject: Telegraph between Earth and Heaven.

"Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee,
Here we are?"—Job xxxviii. 35.

LIGHTNING is not a thing of yesterday, then. It rode the crest of the clouds and flung its coruscations through the fields of immensity thirty-four hundred years ago, as fraught with energy and death as it is to-day. Possibly Job had seen the massive trees on the hills of Arabia dashed to splinters by the lightning, or human beings killed by its stroke. Whether he knew the philosophy of lightning, or the facts of science as taught in modern times; or whether, when he spoke of "sending lightning," he only uttered what he saw would be done in the future, we of course do not know. No thoughtful reader, however, can fail to see that many of his observations on the phenomena and laws of nature are singularly appropriate, and confirmed by the facts of science up to the present hour. Nature's great laws and forces are the steeds of the Almighty. Many of them are indeed wild and fiery; but none of them are too much so to be haltered in and harnessed by man, and made to carry him forward in the road of progress. Through the agency of steam and electricity our commercial and social world has been completely revolutionized during the last fifty years. Since the days of Franklin, what wonderful progress has been made in the study of electricity; and how it has been utilized for the benefit of man! What marvels it has wrought in annihilating time and space! It has converted the world into a mere whispering gallery, flung around it a net-work of wire; and the lightning goes careering over States, over rivers, under oceans, and over continents, so that ere the voice in which it was spoken has died away, the word is written on the other side of the globe. Distant nations are thus brought within speaking distance of each other. Great Britain and the United States,

—the two greatest nations on the globe, the great radiating centres of civilization, commerce, and religion,—can now send lightning and bid each other, Good morning and God speed, in spite of the mighty Atlantic that rolls between them.

This perfect medium of communication between nations I shall use to illustrate the more perfect medium of communication between heaven and earth; a medium wrought out and perfected through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

In Eden man had no need to send despatches or make his requests known to a distant God. God was then present, and in the cool of the day walked among the trees of the garden, in personal and loving converse with man. But the terrible catastrophe of the fall broke the bond of nearness and harmony between them. Man's spiritual gravity was somehow shifted, and turned the other way; and some dread, unknown, infernal centre drew him down, and away from God. God was no longer a magnet to attract, but a being to repel. Continents of moral space lay between them; without any power or desire in man to return, and, as yet, no medium of recovery announced. But God did not long allow this starless night of desolation to cover His fallen creature. A medium of communication was announced in the "seed of the woman;" Immediately, therefore, and as the condition of their approach to God, the blood of Calvary began to be typically poured forth, and flaming altars rolled their incense to the skies. "And Abel, he brought the firstlings of his flock." On downwards through the Patriarchal Dispensation, we find men held intercourse with God through the blood of Atonement, typically shed in their sacrifices. The Economy of Moses was afterwards established, when men held intercourse with God through the medium of Divinely appointed priests, who "offered gifts and sacrifices for the sins of the people." Like post-masters, they stamped the offerings of the people and presented them before God. But this method was indirect and tedious, involving considerable time and expense in the operation. It was something like the old method of carrying the mail by hand or on horseback, as compared with

our lightning express trains and telegraphic communications. It also gave scope for the selfish part of our nature to operate, for it was very expensive. The tenth of all they raised had to be given, and the firstlings of their flocks had to be turned out, in order to hold intercourse with God. Many of our tight-fisted professors to-day would soon lose the spirit of devotion, I fear (if they ever had it), if God demanded a bullock or a ram as the condition of their approach to Him. They would shorten their correspondence to the elliptical brevity of a telegram, and never ask a reply, if the firstlings of their flocks had to be given to pay for the despatch. "In the fulness of time," therefore, Jesus Christ came to open up a new and living way to the Father. As the great antitype of priest, and altar, and sacrifice, He did away with them all, by offering one Sacrifice for sin, of infinite merit and eternal duration. He laid this medium of communication single-handed and alone, in the midst of the most terrible discouragement and opposition. The last span of the mighty cable was laid in the agony of death, as He meekly "cried, IT IS FINISHED, and yielded up the ghost." The invitation now is, "Come, for all things are ready," "without money and without price," "with prayer and supplication make your requests known unto God."

This line was not in thorough working order until the day of Pentecost, when the Divine electricity came down as a mighty rushing wind, and sat as cloven tongues of fire upon the heads of the Disciples. As Peter stood up to deliver his message to the people, the shocks from this Divine battery passed through him and penetrated the multitude, moving them to reformation and penitence, when three thousand messages,—and I don't know how many more,—were sent along this "new and living way," every one of which received a direct answer from God. Ever since it was first laid, the cat fish and the porpoises of scepticism, and the polly-wogs and minnies of infidelity have been pushing and nibbling at it; but their little harmless efforts, together with the friction of the mighty billows, have only given it a lustre and a

brightness which nothing else could have imparted to it. And now, after nearly 1900 years of trial, it abides as strong and as serviceable as ever—the joy of the present and the hope of the future. Voltaire boasted that he would sweep it to destruction; but he was swept to that region himself some time before he completed his job. Many caught up the broom of his logic, as it fell from his palsied hands, and have continued the sweeping. The dust they have raised has bewildered and blinded many; but the grand old line still remains unbroken and unmarred. Every man must be his own operator. No man need send his despatches to the office of the Virgin Mary, begging her to forward them, with a word of intercession at the bottom. It is the most perfect and wonderful phenomenon in the moral universe. In sending a message by telegraph to a distant point, the operator must call to that office, to see if that operator is there and ready to receive it. The most urgent message I ever wished to send by telegraph, was never sent, because we could get no answer from the office where I wished to send it. The operator called and called, but no reply. There are no such delays and disappointments in connection with this telegraph between earth and heaven. Listen to what God says about it. “And it shall come to pass in that day, before they call I will answer.” That is, while they are about to call, and see if the way is clear, “I will save them the trouble, and say, *Send on your despatches, behold, all things are ready.*” “And while they are yet speaking I will hear.” That is, before their prayer is half uttered, I will get the drift of the whole message; and while they are yet speaking the answer shall arrive. Glory be to God, some of us know a little about this quick business, Brethren, this explains how it is that we have been so often filled with the Holy Ghost power before we had *well* commenced to pray, when joy has broken through our swimming eyes, and meant the thanks we could not speak.

Oh, may we all be rich in heavenly intelligence and grace this morning! Let every soul be open to receive the currents

of Divine influence that are moving amongst us, this hour. Let every heart communicate with God. Ask for the descent of the old-fashioned primitive power, which made our fathers so potent in His hand.

T. KELLY, M.A.

U. S. of America.

Subject : "Tongues in Trees."

"The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree :

He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon."—PSALM xcii. 12.

WHOROUGHLY to understand the sacred Scriptures, and to extract from them much of the beauty and instruction they are competent to convey, we must study them not only by the ordinary canons of Biblical interpretation, but we must sometimes have recourse to *external* and *collateral* aid. Some parts of the Bible are so self-evident, that he who runs may read ; other parts are so deep and mysterious, that diligent study is required in order that the meaning may be discovered. The words now under our consideration can only be understood by frequent allusions to the natural history of the palm and cedar ; for the text is like a finger-post, pointing to those two beautiful and suggestive objects in the world of nature. The word "*like*" institutes an analogy between the growth of the righteous and that of the noble and stately trees indicated. Allusions to objects in nature enter into the woof and warp of the texture of Holy Writ, and they are as windows letting in side-light to aid us in understanding the mind and will of God, and our duty and relationship to Him. There are

"Sermons in stones ; tongues in trees ;

Books in running brooks ; and good in everything."

Let us trace the beautiful train of thought here opened up before us by the Royal Psalmist, and learn how the righteous grow in grace, and how they flourish and ripen for celestial glory.

I. *The palm-tree and the cedar grow in apparently uncongenial soil.* In the East the palm does not grow in the fertile loam, but in the arid sand, where there appears to be no moisture

to sustain it, and where the scorching sun seems almost certain to destroy it; and *the cedar* of Lebanon grows, not in the fertile, sheltered valley, where the streamlets play and the silvery rivers glide, but on the rocky heights of the mountains, out from the fissures of the rocks, where all seems cold, and sterile, and unkindly; there, in that uncongenial soil, cradled and rocked by storms and snows, the stately cedar grows. And *the righteous* in this world grow and flourish in apparently uncongenial soil. This world,—I know,—in itself is beautiful, and full of voices speaking to us of its great Creator; and it teems with monuments of the presence and power and Providence of God. The world itself is right; but *sin* is here, and Satan tempts us to pervert and prostitute the pleasures, purposes, and pursuits of life, and employs the things of the world as baits to lure us into sin, as he did in his temptation of our Lord and Master in the wilderness. The *trials* and *temptations* which come to us in connection with our pilgrimage and probation in the world, weary and worry us, and render it *apparently* a very uncongenial place for righteousness to flourish in. To the Christly soul earth often seems like a desert; and the world, hard and cold and rugged as the mountains of Lebanon. And yet the righteous grow; and from the analogy presented in our text, we can learn the reasons how and why.

II. *The palm-tree and cedar grow because they are fed by hidden resources. The palm in the desert is fed by hidden springs that flow beneath the surface of the dry sand; its roots drink deep and are sustained, and they send up the moisture into the leaves and branches, and they are refreshed and invigorated. The roots of the cedar are fed by the streams that come trickling down from the snow-crowned tops of Lebanon; they go far and wide into the fissures of the rocks, securing stability by their sturdy grasp, and continuing strong by drinking of the perpetual supply that comes down from the melting snows. So the righteous in this world grow and flourish. Like the palm, they are fed by hidden resources: with joy they draw water out of the wells of salvation, and Jesus*

declared that men thirsting for salvation were to come unto Him and drink, and that the water He would give them should be *in* them a well of water *springing up* unto everlasting life. *Like the cedar*, the righteous grow, for they are fed by *hidden resources* which come from *above*; the water of life flows down from the river of life that flows by the throne of God. One of the scenes in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" (the house of the Interpreter) will illustrate this. The fire burning against the wall could not be extinguished by the water that was being thrown upon it, because there was a shining one behind, pouring in oil and feeding it, and thus it was secretly sustained. So is it with the Divine life in the heart of man, it must be fed by *hidden springs within and above*; and in proportion to the supply we obtain shall we flourish and grow. How important, then, that the righteous should avail themselves of all those means of grace, which will be as *channels* through which God has promised to convey the supply necessary to the progress of the soul in holiness. All our springs are in God, and the streams of Divine supply flow in the sanctuary; hence, "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God."

III. *The palm-tree and cedar, fed by hidden resources, grow into things of beauty and utility.* The palm is (a) *Erect*. It is not like the bush, or bramble, or nettle, growing near to the earth and seeming to cling to it; the palm rises from the earth, and, while *in* it, seems not to be *of* it; for, towering aloft towards the sky, the palm grows and throws out its feathery branches and graceful leaves, to be seen and admired afar off; so the righteous grow—they are *in* the world, but not *of* it, they are *upright*, growing erectly, not clinging to the earth, or creeping, or crawling upon it; they aspire after heaven and God, and their constant ambition is—

"Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee."

Not like the man with the mud-rake in Bunyan's Pilgrim, but like the true-born of heaven passing through life, with their foreheads fronting the temple of the sky. The attitude of the righteous is upward—in *prayer, faith, aim, hope*. The

palm is (β) *Evergreen*. While most trees in the autumn put on their Joseph's coat of many colours, and shed their foliage to the ground; the palm is evergreen, remains the same through all the circling year; so the righteous are to be *unfading* and *undying* in their profession and practice of holiness; their piety is to be so constant that the heat of summer shall not make it languish; so ardent, that the cold of winter shall not make it freeze. The cedar is also *erect*, *stately*, and *evergreen*, and gives us the ideas of *STABILITY* and *STRENGTH* and *STATELINESS*. The cedar stands the cold and storm, and endures—is *beautiful* and *fragrant*; and the life of the righteous is to be *strong*, *stately*, and *steady*, and *fragrant* to the praise of the glory of God; the storms of life are only to make it root the deeper, and add to its beauty and volume and power. The palm and cedar are not only beautiful, but they are eminently *useful*. The palm is useful (α) for its *fruit*. Gibbon says that the natives of Syria speak of 360 uses to which the palm may be applied. How glad the hungry and thirsty travellers are when they come to a cluster of palms! for they know they will find food to revive and cheer them there. The palm is useful (β) for its *shade*. The weary, wayworn traveller rejoices, not only in its fruit, but in the shade and shelter which its spreading leaves afford; and there he reclines and reposes his weary limbs, and resumes his journey with renewed vigour. The palm is useful (γ) as an *emblem of victory*. Under the Old Testament dispensation palm leaves and branches were regarded as fitting emblems of victory; and in all the triumphs and rejoicings of Israel they were waved by the people with shouts and gladness. Palm branches were strewn in the way as Jesus rode in triumph to Jerusalem; and the white-robed throng in heaven is represented to us as having palm branches in their hands—emblems of victory and joy. In all these particulars the righteous are as the palm-tree, for they *yield the fruit of the lip* and of the *life* to the praise and the glory of God; and their lives are not only happy and holy, but exceedingly *useful* to their fellow men. They live, not for themselves, but for others, and en-

deavour to leave the world better than they found it. They also *afford grateful shelter and shade* to the weary and heavy-laden ones; they, in the name of their great Master, spread forth their arms, and invite the world to His embrace, and reiterate His cry, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." They are not like nettles and brambles, to *prick* and *sting* all who come in contact with them, but like palms, to succour and shelter the weary and the sad. The righteous are as palm-trees, the *emblems of victory*; they have been victorious over the difficulties that beset their pathway and opposed them in their coming to Christ—they have overcome *Satan*, and they are overcoming the *world*, and they are to conquer even *death* itself, the last enemy; and they are to come off in the end *more than conquerors* through Him who hath loved them. Much that we have said about the palm will apply with equal force and aptness to the *cedar*, for it is *towering* and *wide-spreading* and *evergreen*, exceedingly *noble*, and very *useful*; and there is *this* additional about the cedar—its wood was exceedingly useful for *sacred purposes*, being used in the building of places dedicated to the worship of the most High. So the righteous—they grow *stately* like cedars, and when cut down by the hand of death, they are removed to the new Jerusalem, and form part of the Church triumphant in the skies. What a picture of the righteous! How far short many of us fall of its requirements! Let us aim to come up to the standard required for God's *sanctuary* and *service*.

"Lord, 'tis a pleasant thing to stand
In gardens planted by Thy hand;
Let me within Thy courts be seen,
Like a young cedar, fresh and green."

CONCLUSION.—We are reminded of the *contrast* between the righteous and the wicked. The righteous are as the *palm* and *cedar*, as trees planted by rivers of water; but the ungodly are not so, but are like the *chaff* which the wind driveth away; they are like *grass* and *stubble*, unstable and unenduring. The wicked shall not grow, but *decay*; they shall

not flourish, but *wither*. Faith unites the soul to the Lord our Righteousness, then, by constant *trust, penitence, and prayer*, we grow and flourish in Him, till we become *transplanted* into the paradise above.

F. W. BROWN.

The Preacher's Finger-Post.

SKETCHES FROM GENESIS.

No. 32.

*Subject: JOSEPH'S PROMOTION
IN EGYPT.*

"And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?"—*GEN. xli. 37-45.*

These words reveal what took place after the interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams by Joseph; the interpreter was exalted to the highest position, next to the king, in Egypt. We offer the following remarks on this promotion of the prisoner.

I. It was unexpected.

Doubtless Joseph had been expecting his release from prison for a long time; ever since the departure of the chief butler, he had been looking for his freedom. The butler, however, had forgotten his benefactor for two long years, and Joseph was left groaning in prison. How often men in prosperity for-

get those who had been kind to them in their adversity and distress! Now Joseph is called to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, he knew that God would enable him to give the right interpretation, and thought probably that this would be the means of his obtaining the liberty he so much desired, especially as his imprisonment was not the result of crime. The thought of being next to the king in authority and dominion throughout the land of Egypt never entered his mind; however, this was God's plan, and the promotion to Joseph was quite unexpected. Many of the most important events in our history come to meet us suddenly. To the humble-minded all true exaltations are matters of surprise, rather than the realization of a long-cherished desire. When the Spirit of God enters the heart, and gives a title to the highest honour, the noblest service and the purest enjoyment, it is unex-

pectedly. "The kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation."

II. A promotion which did not destroy the man.

The change was sudden and great from the prison to the palace, but it did not destroy the manhood of Joseph; he remains the same kind loving person; the circumstances of life could not affect his true nobility of heart. Some men are so weak and small that the least amount of prosperity seems to destroy the little good that was in them. It is one of the greatest blessings to society that some persons are kept in poverty. If providence smiled upon them they would become a curse to the neighbourhood in which they reside. Sudden wealth, unexpected honour, and authority have been too much for some to bear, they became "exalted above measure." Joseph remains the same humble, self-denying man he was before this honour was conferred upon him. Only *true men* can bear the sudden changes and revolutions of time, others bend like a reed. The true can use without misusing the wealth and renown of this world, whilst its poverty and shame cannot shake their confidence in the wise and kind Ruler of the universe.

III. A promotion for which he had been trained.

The past life of this young

man had been somewhat rough and stormy; however, the adversities of life did not shake his confidence in God, but every wave seemed to toss him nearer to his heavenly Father. In the school of adversity he had been taught the need of sympathy, so that he would be the more able to sympathize with the poor and famine-stricken during the coming scarcity. There are various forms in the school of life; some of us have to remain longer than others in the lower before we are removed to the higher form. The Great Master knows the best means to be employed; and sometimes we have to suffer adversity and affliction to prepare us to enjoy the higher walks of life. The prison sometimes comes before the mansion, and much tribulation before the Father's house with its many dwelling-places.

IV. A promotion highly beneficial to others.

All the people in Egypt were to reap the benefit of Joseph's position and power. If any of them envied him, and questioned whether the dignity conferred upon him was too great for the service he rendered, they would be convinced during the famine that he was the right man in the right place; and the family in Canaan, the covenanted people, could derive great advantage from it also.

As members of society, we cannot live to ourselves: our prosperity or adversity affects others; and the higher we ascend the more we ought to think of the welfare of others. When God exalts men spiritually, it is not merely for their own comfort and ease, but that they may be the means of keeping others alive, by pointing them to the Bread which came down from heaven.

CYMRU.

Guernsey.

Subject : UNCONDITIONAL TRUST IN GOD.

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."—Job xiii. 15.

The measure of our *being* is the measure of our strength. He only is strong who is "strong in the Lord." He only who is strong in the Lord rises superior to circumstances. Hence,—

Neither sickness of body nor disaster to property affect a Christ-like manhood.

Neither worldly splendour nor the state of our bodily health affords any criterion to the state of the soul. There is wealth *minus* wealth, and poverty *minus* poverty. At the time Job uttered the words of the text, he was a rich poor man. His was soul wealth, and that is the sole wealth of mortals. In that he had been, was, and should be rich. The words of the

text, then, are Autobiographical, Educational, Prophe- tical.

Assuming that these words were the reflex of Job's *being*, we notice,—

I. These words are AUTO- BIOGRAPHICAL.

Not only do they afford insight into the then state of Job's heart, but they tell us what he had been. Notice, trials not only show character, but reveal history. (1) The racehorse which is first at the goal, when fair play has had scope, shows at once its good constitution and its superior training. (2) The schoolboy who is first on examination day, manifests not only retentiveness of memory, but past diligence. (3) The victorious general argues the well-drilled soldier.

Learn: (a) Character, whether good or bad, is not formed by one spasmodic effort. Hence, (b) "Rising with the occasion" is a solecism. (c) In order to our being strong in adversity, we should now give ourselves to Christ.

II. These words are EDU- CATIONAL.

They teach us, (a) That the child of God lives by faith, not sight. (1) The property of Job was gone. (2) The patience, if not the affection of his wife was exhausted. (3) His "comforters" were in reality his tormentors. Yet he trusted in

God (Hab. iii. 17, 18). (b) The child of God does not regard his relation to God as merely commercial. (1) He lives in the region of privilege, not in that of duty only. (2) A servant looks for *pay*, a son is satisfied with love. (3) He who has God, has enough, for he has all. (c) The child of God bases his trust upon the last contingency. "Slay me," says Job, yet "I'll trust." Some men can trust only so far. Like a barge, a waggon, or a crane, they can bear only a certain weight.

III. These words are PROPHETICAL.

(a) With respect to this life. What a man is at any given time, is an index to what he will be. No doubt a bad man may be changed, and a good one may alter. Still our daily procedure goes upon the principle that a man's present character indicates his future. Hence, (1) We train children aright that they may be respectable men and women, not less than respectable children. (2) We engage servants and assistants for what they are, as indicative, not only of what they have been, but of what they will be. So, (3) Given the knowledge whether we be in Christ, we may know what we shall be in the future—in kind, though not in degree. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," in amount either of blessed-

ness or misery. (b) "With respect to a future life. "Slay me, yet will I trust." The child of God has a sure hope. Learn, (1) Trust in God fits for life here and hereafter. (2) The urgent necessity of determining whose we are. (3) The God of Job is our God.

J. S. SWAN.

Subject: COVETOUSNESS.

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."—HEB. xiii. 5, 6.

The subject of these words is *covetousness*, which means an inordinate desire for gain.

I. Covetousness in life SHOULD BE AVOIDED. "Conversation" stands for the whole of a man's life. It means the manner of life; every part of life should be free from covetousness. Covetousness, as a principle in human conduct, is,—

First: *Unnatural*. The soul was made to be inspired and ruled by the opposite principle—benevolence.

Secondly: *Immoral*. It is directly contrary to the character of God and the genius of the universe.

Thirdly: *Pernicious*. It injures every faculty of the mind. It is a blight upon the soul.

II. Covetousness in life INTERFERES WITH CONTENTMENT.

"Be content with such things as ye have." It makes the soul restless and dissatisfied. "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance with increase." A covetous man has a gnawing hunger that nothing can satisfy. It is always crying for more. It is in the heart like the tide in the sea, allowing no rest. Sir Thomas Browne has quaintly but well described it. "Trust not to the omnipotency of gold, and say not unto it, Thou art my confidence. Kiss not thy hand to that terrestrial sun, nor bore thy ear unto its servitude. A slave unto Mammon makes no servant unto God. Covetousness cracks the sinews of faith; numbs the apprehension of anything above sense; and, only affected with the certainty of things present, makes a peradventure of things to come; lives but unto one world, nor hopes but fears another; makes their own death sweet unto others, bitter unto themselves; brings formal sadness, scenical mourning, and no wet eyes at the grave."

III. Covetousness in life is INCONSISTENT WITH CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

"For He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." So that we may boldly say, [so that with good courage we say] The Lord is

my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." The implication is, that the existence of covetousness implies lack of confidence in God as the ever-present Friend and Helper of man. Unbounded confidence in God is the essence of piety and the condition of well-being. But where covetousness exists such trust is impossible.

CONCLUSION: Beware of covetousness, then! It is essentially incompatible with the soul's well-being.

Hippocrates, in his epistle to Cratera, an herbalist, gives him this good counsel, that, if it were possible, amongst other herbs he should cut up that weed covetousness by the roots, that there be no remainder left; "and then know this for a certainty, that together with their bodies thou mayest quickly cure all the diseases of their minds." For it is indeed the pattern, image, epitome, of all melancholy, the fountain of many miseries, much discontented care and woe; this inordinate or immoderate desire of gain to get or keep money, as Bonaventure defines it; or, as Austin describes it, a madness of the soul; Gregory, a torture; Chrysostom, an insatiable drunkenness; Cyprian, blindness, *speciosum supplicium*, a plague subverting kingdoms, families, an incurable disease; Budæus, an ill habit yielding to no remedies, neither Ea-

culapins nor Plutus can cure them; a continual plague, says Solomon, and vexation of spirit. Another hell.

**Subject: PERSONAL CHRISTLI-
NESS.**

"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."—1 PET. iv. 10.

The Apostle is urging in the context the duty of *social benevolence*. "Above all things," he says, "have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall cover the multitude of sins."

First: Whatever man has, is a *gift* from God. Physical health, social position, worldly wealth, influence, even existence itself, he has as the free gift of God.

Secondly: Whatever man has, he should benevolently employ for the advantage of *others*. He should not live to himself. Like the clouds, the planets, in fact all nature, what he has received he should distribute. Monopoly is a sin against the constitution of things. A miser is a monster in the moral universe.

But we shall regard "the gift" referred to in the text as representing personal religion, or, what is more intelligible, personal *Christliness*. This is a gift not only which makes all other gifts valuable,

but which qualifies and disposes the possessor to use all other gifts rightly. Two remarks are suggested.

I. Personal Christliness is a DIVINE "GIFT." God's gifts to men may be divided into two classes.

(1) Those which He imparts *irrespective* of human choice or effort. Such are light, air, the common elements of life, and existence itself. Man comes into existence, the sun visits him, the heavenly orbs beam over him, and waves of air fan his lungs, without any choice or effort of his own.

(2) Those which He imparts *conditional* on human choice and effort. Such are the crops of the farmer, the mental discipline of the student, the knowledge of the intelligent, the discoveries of the inquirer, etc. In this class of gifts we put personal Christliness. It does not come to a man irrespective of his choice and effort—it requires both. In relation to this gift we offer the following remarks.

First: It is the *greatest* gift. It is, as we have intimated, the gift that gives value to all other gifts. Without this, all other gifts, even existence itself, will become an intolerable curse. This qualifies man to please his Maker, bless humanity, serve the universe, and inherit all things. "All things are yours," etc.

Secondly: It is the *costliest*

gift. When God created the universe, there seems to have been no effort on His part, it was with the greatest ease. "He spake, and it was done." But when He had to restore men, to make them Christlike and thus spiritually save them, most earnest effort on His part is implied. He had to "bow the heavens and come down," to assume human nature, etc.

Another remark suggested is,—

II. Personal Christliness is a Divine gift to be SOCIALLY EMPLOYED. "Even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." Men are made good that they may do good.

First: This social ministry is *obligatory*. "As good stewards." Of all that a man has he is not the proprietor, but the trustee. Existence itself is a talent. So is especially this Christliness, this religion. It is not given for mere private use. We are responsible for it. It makes us moral debtors to all men.

Secondly: This social ministry is *varied*. "Manifold grace." The Christly man can minister good in many forms and many ways. If he has wealth, by relieving the physical necessities of men; if he has knowledge, by removing human ignorance.

"Pure and undefiled religion before God, is to visit the widow," etc. Thus, in many ways, social good may be ministered by a Christly soul. Ministered, not ostentatiously, but humbly; not niggardly, but generously; not with the lip merely, but with the life. The Christly man is the most effective and the most valuable social servant, the greatest minister of state.

Thirdly: This social ministry is *Divine*. "Manifold grace of God." All the manifold things we have are from God, His gifts of free grace. We give *gifts* to men, not personal and independent properties.

CONCLUSION: Learn from this,—

First: The *divinity* of a Christly life. It is the greatest gift of God. What are the highest gifts of mind—reason, imagination, genius, to this? Contemptible in its presence, utterly worthless in its absence. The only truly great man on earth is the Christly man.

Secondly: The *test* of a Christly life. What is the test? Reading Scriptures, singing psalms, church going? No: genuine social benevolence. Every man who has received this true gift does "minister the same one to another."

Seeds of Sermons from the Minor Prophets.

If the Bible as a whole is inspired, it is of vast importance that all its Divine ideas should be brought to bear upon the living world of men. Though the pulpit is the organ Divinely intended for this work, it has been doing it hitherto in a miserably partial and restricted method. It selects isolated passages, and leaves whole chapters and books for the most part untouched. Its conduct to the Minor Prophets may be taken as a case in point. How seldom are they resorted to for texts! and yet they abound with splendid passages throbbing with Divine ideas. It is our purpose to go through this section of the Holy Word; selecting, however, only such verses in each chapter and book as seem the most suggestive of truths of the most vital interest and universal application.

Micah calls himself a Morasthite because he was a native of Morasth-gath, a small town of Judah. He prophesied in the days of Jotham, Ahas, and Hezekiah, Kings of Judah, and his prophetic mission commenced soon after that of Isaiah. He was contemporary with him as well as with Hosea and Amos. His prophecies were directed to Samaria, the capital city of Israel, also to Jerusalem. Hence we find denunciations against Samaria mingled with prophecies concerning Judah and Jerusalem. One of his predictions, it seems, saved the life of Jeremiah, who would have been put to death for foretelling the destruction of the Temple, had not Micah foretold the same thing one hundred years before.

The book is commonly distributed into three sections: chaps. i. and ii., chaps. iii. to v., chaps. vi. and vii. Each of these opens with a summons to hear God's message, and then proceeds with expostulations and threatenings, which are succeeded by glorious promises.

His style is bold, fiery, and abrupt, and has not a little of the poetic grandeur of Isaiah. His sudden transitions from one subject to another often make his writings difficult to decipher.

MICAH.

No. CXIX.

Subject: DIVINE REVELATION.

"The word of the Lord that came to Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahas, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem. Hear, all ye people; hearken, O earth; and all that therein is: and let the Lord God be witness against you, the Lord from His holy temple."—MICAH i.

"It is not," says Delitzsch, "a little remarkable that Micah should adopt as the first sentence of his prophecy that with which his namesake concluded his denouncement against Ahab" 1 Kings xxii. 28. Hengstenberg is of opinion that "he quoted the words designedly, in

order to show that his prophetic agency was to be considered as a confirmation of that of his predecessor, who was so zealous for God, and that he had more in common with him than the bare name."

We may take these words as suggesting certain thoughts concerning *Divine revelation*, or the Bible.

I. It is the "WORD OF THE LORD." What is a word?

First: A mind *manifesting* power. In his word a true man manifests himself, his thought, feeling, character; and his word is important according to the measure of his faculties, experiences, attainments. Divine revelation manifests the mind of God, especially the moral characteristics of that mind—

His rectitude, holiness, mercy, etc. A word is,—

Secondly: A mind *influencing* power. Man uses his word to influence other minds, to bring other minds into sympathy with his own. Thus God uses His word. He uses it to correct human errors, dispel human ignorance, remove human perversities, and turn human thought and sympathy into a course harmonious with His own mind.

II. It is "the word of the Lord" MADE TO INDIVIDUAL MEN. It "came to Micah the Morasthite." It did not come to all men of his age and country in common. It came to him and a few more. Why certain men were chosen as the special recipients of God's word, is a problem whose solution must be left for eternity. If it be said, The men to whom God made special communications were men whose mental faculties, moral genius, and habits specially qualified them to become recipients, and if all men had the same qualifications, all would have Divine communications, the difficulty is not removed by this; for it might still be asked, Why have not all men such qualifications? The fact remains, that "holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

III. It is "the word of the Lord" made to individual men FOR ALL MANKIND. "Hear, all ye people; hearken, O earth, and all that therein is!" God did not speak to any individual man specially that the communication might be kept to himself, but that he might communicate it to others. He makes one man the special recipient of

truth, that he may become the organ and promoter of it. God's word is for the world, and the man who has it should give it. God enlightens, renews, and saves man by man.

NO. CXX.

Subject: GOD'S PROCEDURE IN RELATION TO SIN.

"For, behold, the Lord cometh forth out of His place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth. And the mountains shall be molten under Him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place. For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? is it not Samaria? and what are the high places of Judah? are they not Jerusalem? Therefore I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof. And all the graven images thereof shall be beaten to pieces, and all the hires thereof shall be burned with the fire, and all the idols thereof will I lay desolate: for she gathered it of the hire of an harlot, and they shall return to the hire of an harlot."—MICAH i. 3-7.

This is a highly figurative and sublime representation of the Almighty in His retributive work, especially in relation to Samaria and Jerusalem. He is represented as leaving His holy temple, coming out of His place, and marching with overwhelming grandeur over the high places of the earth, to deal out punishment to the wicked. "Behold, the Lord cometh forth

out of His place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth. And the mountains shall be molten under Him," etc., etc. "The description of this theophany," says Delitzsch, "is founded upon the idea of a terrible storm and earthquake, as in Ps. xviii. 8. The mountains melt (Judg. v. 4 and Ps. lxxviii. 9) with the streams of water which discharge themselves from heaven (Judg. v. 4), and the valleys split with the deep channels cut out by the torrents of water. The similes 'like wax,' etc. (as in Ps. lxxviii. 3), and 'like water' are intended to express the complete dissolution of mountains and valleys. The actual facts answering to this description, are the destructive influences exerted upon nature by great national judgments."

The reference is undoubtedly to the destruction of the king of Israel by Shalmaneser, and the invasion of Judah by the armies of Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar, by the latter of whom the Jews were carried away captive.

The passage is an inexpressibly grand representation of God's *procedure in relation to sin*. Let us look at this procedure in two aspects.

I. AS IT APPEARS TO THE EYE OF MAN. The Bible is eminently anthropomorphic: it presents God to man in human attributes and modes of operation. Two thoughts are suggested—

First: God, in dealing out retribution, appears to man in an *extraordinary position*. "He cometh forth out of His place." What is His place? To all intelligent beings, the settled place of the Almighty is the

temple of love, the pavilion of goodness, the mercy seat. The general beauty, order, and happiness of the universe, give all intelligent creatures this impression of Him. But when confusion and misery fall on the sinner, the Almighty seems to man to come out of His "place," to step aside from His ordinary procedure. Not that He does so; but in man's view He seems to. The Immutabile One does not change His purpose. His purpose is benevolent, though in carrying it forward it necessarily brings misery to those who oppose it.

Judgment is God's strange work. He comes out of His place to execute it.

Secondly: God, in dealing out retribution, appears to man in a *terrific aspect*. He does not appear as in the silent march of the stars or the serenity of the sun; but as in thunder storms and volcanic eruptions. "The mountains shall be molten under Him, and the valleys shall be cleft as wax before the fire." Though the Almighty is as benign and serene when bringing deserved suffering upon the sinner, as He is when filling heaven with gladness, yet to the suffering sinner He always seems terrific. He seems to be rending the heavens, cleaving the mountains, and tearing the earth to pieces. God is evermore to an intelligent creature according to the moral state of his soul. Look at this procedure,—

II. AS IT AFFECTS A SINFUL PEOPLE. In God's procedure in relation to sin, what disastrous effects were brought upon Samaria and Jerusalem!

First: God, in His procedure

in relation to sin, brings *material ruin* upon people. "Therefore I will make Samaria as a heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof." It means utter ruin. Sin brings material ruin upon a people, brings on commercial decay, political ruin, destroys the health of the body, and brings it ultimately to the dust. Sin brings material ruin.

Secondly: God, in His procedure in relation to sin, brings *mental anguish* upon a people. "And all the graven images thereof shall be beaten to pieces, and all the hires thereof shall be burned with the fire, and all the idols thereof will I lay desolate." A disruption between the soul and the objects of its supreme affections, involves the greatest anguish. The gods of a people, whatever they may be, are these objects, and these are to be destroyed. "The graven images thereof shall be beaten to pieces." The divinities, the fanes, the priests—all shattered. Such is the ruin which sin brings on a people.

CONCLUSION: Mark well, that God has a course of conduct in relation to sin; or rather, that God, in His beneficent march, must ever appear terrible to the sinner and bring ruin on his head. It is the wisdom as well as the duty of all intelligent creatures, to move in thought, sympathy, and purpose as God moves—move with Him, not against Him. To move with Him, is to see Him in all the attraction of Fatherhood; to move against Him, is to see Him in all the horrors of an infuriated Judge.

NO. CXXI.

Subject: MORAL INCURABLENESS.

"Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked: I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls. For her wound is incurable; for it is come unto Judah; he is come unto the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem."—MICAH i. 8, 9.

These verses have been thus translated, "Therefore will I lament and howl; I will go spoiled and naked; I will keep lamentation like the jackals, and mourning like the ostriches. For her stripes are malignant, for it comes to Judah, reaches to the gate of My people, to Jerusalem." Micah's intention is not only to exhibit publicly his mourning for the approaching calamity of Judah, but also to set forth in a symbolical form the fate that awaits the Judeans. And he can only do this by including himself in the nation, and exhibiting the fate of the nation in his own person. "Wailing like jackals and ostriches, is a loud, strong, mournful cry, those animals being distinguished by a mournful wail."

We shall take these words as suggesting the subject of *moral incurableness*. Samaria and Jerusalem were, in a material and political sense, in a desperate and hopeless condition. Our subject is *moral incurableness*, and we make two remarks concerning it.

I. It is a condition INTO WHICH MEN MAY FALL.

First: *Mental Philosophy* shows this. Such is the constitution of the human mind, that the repetition of an act can generate an uncontrollable

tendency to repeat it; and the repetition of a sin deadens altogether that moral sensibility which constitutionally recoils from the wrong. The mind often makes habit, not only second nature, but the sovereign of nature.

Secondly: *Observation* shows this. That man's circle of acquaintance must be exceedingly limited who does not know men who become morally incurable. There are incurable liars, incurable misers, incurable sensualists, and incurable drunkards. No moral logician, however great his dialectic skill, can forge an argument strong enough to move them from their old ways, even when urged by the seraphic fervour of the highest rhetoric.

Thirdly: *The Bible* shows this. What did Solomon mean when he said: "Speak not in the ears of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of thy words?" What did Christ mean when He said, "Give not that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine." And again: "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes." We often speak of retribution as if it always lay beyond the grave, and the day of grace as extending through the whole life of man; but such is not the fact. Retribution begins with many men here; the day of grace terminates with many before the day of

death. There are those who reach an unconvertible state, their characters are stereotyped and fixed as eternity.

II. It is a condition FOR THE PROFOUNDDEST LAMENTATION. At the desperate condition of his country the prophet is brought into the most poignant distress. "Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked. I will make a wailing like the dragons and mourning as the owls." Christ wept when He considered the moral incurableness of the men of Jerusalem. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" etc., etc. There is no sight more distressing than the sight of a morally incurable soul. There is no building that I pass that strikes me with greater sadness than the Hospital for "Incurables;" but what are incurable bodies, compared to *morally incurable* souls? There are anodynes that may deaden their pains, and death will relieve them of their torture; but a *morally incurable* soul is destined to pass into anguish, intense and more intense as existence runs on, and peradventure without end. The incurable body may not necessarily be an injury to others; but a *morally incurable* soul must be a curse as long as it lives. Were we truly alive to the moral state of wicked men around us, we should be ready to break out in the words of the prophet, "Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked," etc.

Biblical Criticism.

Subject: The Righteousness of God.

Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; μὴ ἀδικία παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ; μὴ γένοιτο. τῷ γὰρ Μωσῇ λέγει, Ἐλπίσω ὃν ἂν ἐλεῶ, καὶ οὐκ ἐκτερίψω ὃν ἂν οὐκ ἐκτερίψω. Ἄρα οὖν ὁ τοῦ θέλοντος, οὐδὲ τοῦ τρέχοντος, ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἐλεοῦντος Θεοῦ. λέγει γὰρ ἡ γραφή τῷ Φαραῶ, Ὅτι εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἐξήγειρά σε, ὅπως ἐνδείξωμαι ἐν σοὶ τὴν δύναμίν μου, καὶ ὅπως διαγγελῇ τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐν πάσῃ τῇ γῇ. Ἄρα οὖν ὃν θέλει, ἐλεεῖ· ὃν δὲ θέλει, σκληρύνει.—*ROM. ix. 14-18.*

Ver. 14.—“What shall we say then?” Can we therefore be accused of charging God with unrighteousness and unfairness by this assertion? By no means. For we declare God’s indisputable statement. “God forbid.” The Jews thought that they could not possibly be rejected by God, that the Gentiles could not possibly be received. As, therefore, an upright man treats insolent and spiteful suitors with more severity than he really feels, that he may defend his own or his patron’s rights, and may not unseasonably betray and sacrifice his character for liberality, so Paul defends God’s power and justice against the Israelites who trusted to their name and merits. On this subject he sometimes uses the appropriate terms to which it appears that he was formerly accustomed in the Pharisaic school. He says, no man can prescribe anything to the Lord God, nor demand and insolently wrest anything from Him as a debt, nor can any man prohibit Him in anything or require a reason why He is kind to others. Paul, therefore, abruptly checks, by a severe answer, captious and spiteful objectors. For it is lawful to no man to deal with God as if he were His creditor. Even if this were so, God deals more strictly with the man. Compare *Matt. xx. 13-15*, which is quite parallel: “I do thee no wrong,” etc. In one sense, therefore, Paul’s language refutes the advocates of good works. Another and milder one in behalf of believers, is concealed under his words. In the Scriptures too, especially when we proceed from the proposition to that on which the proposition rests, the modes of expression, as well as the reasonings, should be considered. Nevertheless, no comment can possibly be as

plain as the text of Paul, the sense of which the self-righteous man cannot fail to understand.

Ver. 15.—“For to Moses.” Many think that the objection extends from this verse to ver. 18. Thus “for” is used as in chap. iii. 7; and “thou wilt say then,” ver. 19, concludes the objection which was begun in ver. 14. In very fact, by this introduction of the adversary, the rejoinder which is censured in ver. 20, and afterwards refuted by the use of the words themselves or of their synonyms, would be suitably expressed. Meanwhile, Paul so speaks that the objector answers himself; therefore the words here may strictly be regarded as spoken in the person of the Apostle, as we shall now try to show. Moses (Exod. xxxiii.) had prayed for himself and the people by the grace of the Lord, and had concluded with “show me Thy glory.” The Lord answered, “I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.” The Lord did not immediately make known even to Moses those to whom He was about to show grace and mercy, although the question concerned Moses and the Israelites alone, not the Gentiles. To Moses,—not merely to others by Moses, *Μωσῆς*,—to Moses, says Paul, as afterwards *τῷ Φαραὼ*, to Pharaoh, the Lord spoke thus: “By my proclamation, and by most abundant working hereafter I will designate him as the object of grace and mercy on whomsoever I bestow grace and mercy.” Thus intimating that He would make proclamation concerning grace and mercy, which He soon after did (Exod. xxxiv. 6); “merciful and gracious,” etc., to thousands; adding, “and will by no means clear the guilty,” etc. Therefore, according to the subsequent proclamation, the meaning of the previous promise is clearly this:—“I will show thee grace so abundant that thou mayest see concerning me all that thou desirest and canst receive, that thou mayest farther understand that it is grace; because I have once for all embraced thee in grace, and thou acknowledgest it is grace. And to the rest of the people I will show the most abundant mercy, in

not at once destroying them for their idolatry, that they may further understand that it is mercy; because I have once for all embraced them in mercy and thou for them acknowledged that it is mercy." The Septuagint and Paul have expressed the meaning of this sentence by the difference between the present and future tense: ἐλεήσω ὃν ἂν ἐλεῶ, καὶ οἰκτιρήσω ὃν ἂν οἰκτιρῶ, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy;" not, as English version—"will have mercy." There is a *ploce* (repetition of a word to express an attribute of it); the sense being nearly the same as in chap. xiii. 7. This figure here expresses the liberty of the agent of whom the Apostle is speaking, as in Exod. xvi. 23. Moreover, each verb repeated in both the clauses, contains the emphasis on its first mention, although elsewhere the verb is usually emphasized when repeated. (Gen. xxvii. 33; xliii. 14; 2 Kings vii. 4). That the acknowledgment of grace and mercy by Moses and the true Israelites is also included, appears from this, that Paul speaks on the contrary of the man that willeth and that runneth, to whom grace is not grace, and mercy is not mercy. The Hebrew pronoun "on whom" is employed twice. It intimates in the former passage, that Moses (to whom the word "grace" is repeated from his own prayers in Exod. xxxiii. 13, where the same *ploce* occurs), and in the latter passage, that the others were among the thousands to whom sinners (their children, grandchildren, etc.) are opposed (Exod. xxxiv. 7). And thus this testimony is very well fitted to prove that there is no unrighteousness with God. The point is clear to believers. But to the advocates of good works it has too harsh a sound. The reason why God is merciful, is nought but His own mercy; for no other ground is mentioned by Moses concerning Moses and Israel. "I will have mercy," that is, No one can forcibly extort anything; all things are in My hand, under My authority and will; if I act otherwise, no one can charge Me with injustice. These remarks sufficiently refute the defender of good works; any further answer is superfluous.

Ver. 16.—"So then." Paul's inference is not here drawn from ὃν ἂν, "on whom," but from "I have mercy" and "I have

compassion." "Not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth." Supply it is the business, will, or course; not that it is vain to will rightly and, what is greater, to run or strive rightly, (1 Cor. ix. 26; Phil. iii. 14); but because to will and to run produce nothing sought by the defenders of works. The human will is opposed to Divine grace, and the human course to Divine operation.

Ver. 17.—"For." He proves that it is of him who shows mercy, even God. "Saith." He exhibits God speaking thus. "Pharaoh." Who lived in Moses' time. "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show My power in thee." For this cause thou hast been preserved until now, that I might show My power, "Have I raised thee up." Sept., διατηρήθης, thou hast been preserved. As Exod. xxi. 21, διαβιῶν, to pass one's life; but Paul, according to his custom, says more significantly, "have I raised thee up." Observe carefully, however, that by ἐγείρω here, the meaning of the verb "raise up" is not expressed as it is used in Zech. xi. 16, but "preserve in being," which in all cases presupposes the previous existence of the subject. The sense then is this: "I have raised thee up a king very powerful, in whom I might show My power, and illustrious, through whom My name might be proclaimed throughout the earth." Therefore this raising up includes the preserving, as the Sept. more mildly render it; and also the verb ἤνεγκεν, endured, which, in ver. 22, is introduced from the passage of Moses. The predecessor had begun to oppress Israel (Exod. ii. 23), and yet the successor did not repent. The *Ordo Temporum* (Chronology) makes his reign very short; and therefore his whole administration was an experience of power. We must add, that this was told to Pharaoh, not at first, but after excessive obstinacy, and it was not even then intended to discourage him from acknowledging Jehovah and releasing the people. The object was to reform him. "Power." By which Pharaoh and his hosts were drowned. "Might be declared." This is done to-day.

Ver. 18.—"Hath He mercy." As on Moses. "Whom He

will." Moreover, Paul shows elsewhere to whom God is willing to show mercy, and whom He is willing to harden. "*Hardeneth.*" That is, maketh incapable of receiving Divine salvation, as Pharaoh. He uses "harden" for "has not mercy," by the substitution of the consequent, although not to have mercy sounds somewhat harsher; so "is sanctified," for "is not unclean" (2 Cor. vii. 14); and "you rescued from," instead of "you did not deliver up" (Josh. xxii. 31). This hardening is—I. Not a beginning of evil in man. II. Not an aggravation of sin. III. It is a manifestation of punitive justice.

C. E. T.

Homiletical Breviaries.

No. CXCVIII.

Subject: THE HOLY BIBLE AND HUMAN SOULS.

"Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."—JAMES i. 21.

Notice, I, THE HOLY BIBLE. First: It is the "*word.*" A revelation of the Divine Mind. As a word, it is *pure, loving, faithful, conquering.* Secondly: It is the "*engrafted word.*" Dr. Davidson renders the word "engrafted" implanted. This word is a seed or germ, which is to be implanted in human souls, there to grow and flourish. It is "an incorruptible seed." Thirdly: It is the "*word*" to *save.* "Which is able to save your souls." From what does it save? From spiritual ignorance, prejudice, thralldom, selfishness, sensuality, guilt, etc. Such is the Bible, Blessed Book! Notice, II. THE HUMAN SOUL. First: The *amazing capability* of the human soul. The strongest proof of the greatness of the human soul is, that it is capable of receiving the word of God. It is capable of taking into itself and growing the ideas of the Infinite Mind. "Behold, a sower went forth to sow," etc. Secondly: The *moral obligation* of the human soul. What is it? To "receive with meekness the engrafted word." You are bound to receive it; you are made for it. Receive it in a humble, reverent, docile, spirit.

No. CXCIX.

Subject: THE WORSHIP OF HEAVEN.

"They sang a new song."—REV. v. 9.

The sublime paragraph of which this is a part has been expounded in a previous volume of the *Homilist*. We take these few words now, merely because they suggest two thoughts concerning the worship of heaven. I. It is *JUBILANT*. "They sang." Singing is the natural language of joy. The worship of heaven is not mechanical, not irksome. It is the outbreathing of the soul into rapture, the rapture of *gratitude, admiration, reverence, and love*. II. It is *FRESH*. "A new song." There is nothing monotonous in heaven. Souls have an instinctive craving for variety, and the Creator has amply provided for this instinct. In the life of souls in heaven, there is something fresh every hour—fresh *sceneries, fresh occurrences, fresh engagements, fresh connections, fresh thoughts*; it is a "new song." Heaven is ever fresh.

No. CC.

Subject: AUTUMN, A SEASON FOR NATIONAL INSTRUCTION.

"Look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."—JOHN iv. 35.

Autumn, or the "feast of harvest," is not only a season for national *gratitude, national rejoicing, and national philanthropy*, but also a season for national *instruction*. Look at the harvest fields, and mark, I. The *RESUSCITATING* principle of the Divine government. What you see in the fields ripened to perfection, was a few months ago buried under the earth and apparently dead; but there is a resuscitating force in the Divine government that quickened the dormant germ. First: This principle is seen at work in the general mind of mankind, calling up buried thoughts and impressions. Secondly: In the conversion of souls, quickening the conscience and imparting spiritual vitality. Thirdly: This principle will be seen on a grand scale in the general resurrection. Mark, II. The *RETRIBUTIVE* principle in the Divine government. You see nature giving back what it has received. First: Giving back in *kind*. Wheat for wheat, barley for barley. Secondly: Giving back in *amount*. The more she receives, the more is given back. This is true also in the moral system.

"Be not deceived, God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Mark, III. The **MULTIPLYING** principle in the Divine government. For one grain, many are given back—some thirty, some sixty, some an hundred fold. Nature is wonderfully prolific, its resources are inexhaustible. In the moral system it is the same. One true thought may run into thousands, one noble deed may become the parent of millions. Nothing true is lost; on the contrary, everything true is multiplied. Virtue is an incorruptible and an ever-multiplying seed. Mark, IV. The **MATURING** principle in the Divine government. Through slow stages of growth all you see in the fields has reached a point of maturation. It is so in morals. Character ripens. There is the blade, the ear, the full corn in the ear. The time hastens with all, when Destiny will say, Thrust in the sickle, for the harvest is ready.

No. CCI.

Subject: THE CREATOR MINISTERING TO THE WANTS OF HIS CREATION.

"Thou openest Thine hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing."—PSALM cxlv. 16.

How does the Almighty provide for His creatures? I. *Personally*. "Thou." The pseudo-sage ascribes the fruits of the earth to the elements and laws of nature. But the Bible, which is true science, ascribes them to God. God has not left nature, He is in it, the great spirit in all the wheels of its machinery. There is a Personal God in personal action, in all nature, "Thou." How does He provide? II. *Easily*. He has only to open His hand. There is no labour, no effort; simply "Thou openest thine hand." How easily God does His work! How easily He rolls ponderous globes and massive systems through immensity! To communicate good to His creatures, is easy work to Him. First: It is *agreeable* to His heart. He has not to struggle as we often do against inner propensions and habit in order to show kindness. It is a gratification to His benevolence. Secondly: it is *nothing* to His power. It costs Him no effort; the whole universe arose at first by His word. How does He provide? III. *Abundantly*. "And satisfiest the desire of every living thing." Every living thing, of every variety, from the minutest to the largest, from the microscopic insect to the mighty archangel.

No. CCII.

Subject: GIVING AND RECEIVING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."—ACTS XX. 35.

These words at once discover to us the explanation of all that is most beautiful in the scene described in the chapter. They indicate what was the governing spirit of Paul's life, the spirit that gave him the power over men he wielded. Again, these words suggest to us much about the unrecorded portions of our Saviour's life. As we read this sentence, we wonder when and where it was uttered. Perhaps in rebuke to Zebedee's wife, or to the disciples in some self-seeking hour, perhaps in praise of the woman in Simon's house or the widow at the Temple treasury. Yet again we have here a motto for every Christian. It reminds us, I. That we can only give what we have received. From man, or directly from God, we have received all that we possess, and our power of acquirement. II. That we have received in order that we may give. This is the teaching of revelation. It is in harmony with nature. The flowers do not retain, but emit their fragrance; the rivers do not hold back, but roll on their waters; the stars do not absorb, but reflect their light. It is suggested by our chief receptive organs; eye, lip, hand have as much to do with giving as receiving. III. It is better to give than to receive. It is good to receive, but better to give. 1. *It is nobler.* The weak, mean, frail, helpless, can receive. It was the teaching of the old classics, that it is a nobler thing to bestow. Artaxerxes tells how receiving marks the subject—giving, the ruler; Aristotle, how receiving marks the slave—giving, the freeman; Seneca, how receiving makes usurers—giving, the gods. 2. *It is diviner.* God is the Great Giver. They who would share His Spirit and enter into His delights, must give.

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No. CCIII.

Subject: JUSTIFIED BY CHRIST'S BLOOD.

"Much more then, being now justified by His blood," etc.—ROM. V. 9.

Some texts speak of the subject of faith, others of the object of faith, and others boldly and distinctly of the severed object as that which saves; meaning, to be consistent, the object when believed in. We are justified by faith. We are saved by faith in

Christ's blood. We are justified by His blood; only when believed in as such. What faith sees, justifies! It is not faith, but the death of Jesus; which we can only appreciate by faith. This "blood" is therefore as good as non-existent (for our justification) if we have not the faith in it which must lead us to depend on it as our ransom from guilt and sinfulness. Now, may we be permitted to lay the quoted text on another more involved one (Rom. iii. 24, 35). "*Being justified*," (the present passive participle, as Rom. v. 9, has the first aorist passive participle) . . . (verse 25) *ἐν* by His blood (*ἐν*, as in the first quoted passage of this epistle). Thus, Rom. iii. 24, 25, would beautifully read, true to Pauline parenthesis, as follows:—"BEING JUSTIFIED, —freely, by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (whom God hath set forth to be a propitiatory or mercy-seat through faith),—BY HIS BLOOD!" Suffer one word more, for better critics also to decide on. If the above be correct, or if not, the continuing words "to declare His righteousness διὰ τῆς πίστεως," κ.τ.λ. make the instance of righteousness here declared to be, not the blood (or atonement), but the forgiveness. A similar construction is in Romans iv. 25: "Who was delivered BECAUSE OF our offences; and was raised again BECAUSE OF our justification." The blood,—the death, that is,—having justified us (believing therein) He was raised again; the mere dying having sufficed. How awfully pure our loving Father's holiness! With Him, pardon requires on man's side to be a justification by Christ's death, and on God's side an act of justice to Christ's death. Holy, holy, holy is He!

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PROUD FRAUDS.—Let us hold with Coleridge, that religious frauds are the worst of frauds, bearing dreary crops of misery, deceit, and crime, at utter variance with the faith, the trust, and the truth that lie at the root of the spiritual life of man. For we may not hold back a truth, utter an untruth. The freest disclosure alone combines safety and peace. Faith must not be at issue with itself, religion cannot be irrational or untrue. We may not conceive God otherwise than as absolute truth, perfect goodness, infinite wisdom. And to God and our own conscience are we alone accountable for discerning those attributes in Him.—*Dr. MacCormac.*

The Chief Founders of the Chief Faiths.

Around no men, amongst all the millions of mankind, does so much interest gather as around the Founders of the Chief Religious Faiths of the world. Such men are sometimes almost lost in the obscurity of remote ages, or of the mystery with which they surrounded themselves or their early followers invested them. But whenever they can be discerned, their characters analysed, and their deeper experiences understood, they are found to be, not only leaders and masters of the multitudes who have adopted more or less of their creed and ritual, but also interpreters (more or less partial) of the universal yearnings of the soul of man. Such men may have seemed to sit at the fountains of human thought and feeling, and to have directed or have coloured the mysterious streams; but they have quite as often indicated in their doctrines and in their deeds the strong courses of the thoughts and feelings which are more permanent and deeper than any one man or even any one age could completely discover. The aim of these papers will be, with necessary brevity, to review the chief of such men, noting suggestively rather than exhaustively, their biography, their circumstances, their theology, and their ethics. And in concluding the series, it is proposed to compare and to contrast each and all of them with the "One Man whom in the long roll of ages we can love without disappointment and worship without idolatry, the Man Christ Jesus."

PRINCIPAL BOOKS OF REFERENCE.—Max Müller's "History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature," "The Science of Language," Chips from a German Workshop; Rev. F. D. Maurice's "Religions of the World;" Archdeacon Hardwick's "Christ and other Masters;" Rev. J. W. Gardner's "Faiths of the World;" Miss Mary Carpenter's "Last Days of Rammohun Roy;" Rev. F. W. Farrar's "Witness of History to Christ;" Rev. A. W. Williamson's "Journey in North China;" Canon Liddon's Bampton Lecture on "Our Lord's Divinity;" Cousin's "History of Modern Philosophy;" S. Clarke's "Ten Great Religions;" Father Hue's "Christianity in China;" Carlyle's "Heroes and Hero-Worship."

SECOND SERIES.

No. IV.

JESUS AND ZOROASTER.

NO figure of all those at whom we have glanced, appears, as we have seen,* more distant or dim than that of the great Persian whom we have now to compare and contrast with the Saviour of the World. It is very clear, however, that the sense of the conflict between Good and Evil is the keynote both of the history of the man Zoroaster, and of his religious system. As Christians, we at once feel that there is in this one fact very much that our Lord and Master had in common with him, and that Christianity has in common with this Iranic religion. In pursuing the method we have already

* Vol. vii., pp. 284, 294, 347.

applied to Buddhism and Confucianism and Mahometanism, we notice about the theme now before us,—

I. JESUS, LIKE ZOROASTER, TEACHES THAT THERE IS A MOMENTOUS CONFLICT GOING ON BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL.

How many of our Lord's *parables*, as for instance that of the Tares among the Corn, or of the Wicked Husbandmen persecuting and slaying Divine Messengers, and even the Divine Son, are pictures of the moral antagonisms of our world! Indeed, all His parables that illustrate "the Kingdom of Heaven," reveal that kingdom as in essential collision with the kingdoms of selfishness and sin that hold their terrific sway over the human race. The *miracles*, too, recorded in the gospels, such especially as that which quelled the storm, or those which healed the sick, or expelled devils, or raised the dead, reveal, not only a conflict between Good and Evil, but the victorious power of Good. Then there are our Lord's direct *statements*, that He came, "not to give peace, but a sword," and that "He that is not with Me is against Me," statements repeated in many forms that not only acknowledge the spiritual war, but assert His leadership. Now, as we have seen, Zoroastrianism is full of the same teaching. Light, which is the symbol, not of Intelligence only, but of Goodness, is in essential and unresting war with Darkness, the appropriate symbol of all that is the opposite of Intelligence and Goodness. Ormuzd, the Lord of Light, is fiercely and ceaselessly opposed by Abriman, the Prince of Darkness. The liturgy is full of appeals and hopes for the victory of Ormuzd, and of prescriptions and ceremonies which shall, in their way, serve the ruin of Ahriman. That indeed seems to be the one light that gleams on the pages of the Zendavesta, the one spirit of life that throbs through its teachings. So that whilst only one, and He the Captain of human Salvation, has given us clear light on the causes and principles and methods of such a Holy War as John Bunyan depicts, we are sure that the Bedford Dreamer was not more conscious of that war than was the Persian Sage, who, if he knew less, scarcely felt less about "the good fight of Faith."

II. JESUS, LIKE ZOROASTER, TEACHES THAT THIS CONFLICT HAS CONNECTION WITH OTHER WORLDS THAN THIS.

When we listen to the Redeemer declaring that "angels rejoice over" men who forsake sin, or that "Satan has desired to have" one of the twelve disciples, or that a word could have summoned "twelve legions of angels" to His own aid, we learn to regard this earth but as the theatre of the war at which spectators gaze, and from which convoys come from the unseen universe. The Persian creed points also, as we have seen, to the unseen universe, for explanation of the origin of the war, for the motive power on either side, and for the forces that shall decide the final issue. Every Magian's every act of worship implies what Christ distinctly and authoritatively teaches about a heaven and a hell, the supplies of grace, and the machinations of the devil.

III. JESUS, LIKE ZOROASTER, TEACHES THAT THE CONFLICT WILL END IN THE VICTORY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Here again, we might quote from the Saviour's *parables*, to show the certain, complete, and calm conquests of righteousness—conquests illustrated, for instance, in "leaven that leavens the whole lump," or in a complete clearing of the wheat from tares and destruction of them by burning. We might quote His *miracles* of healing and life-giving as dawning lights of the full and unending noon of a Sun of Righteousness. Or such *statements* of His as, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." Or, not least of all, His teaching His disciples to offer as a *prayer* that will surely be fulfilled, "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." And though the hope did not rest on such foundations as the Christian, it is very clear Zoroaster not only yearned for, but believed in, the eventual conquest of the right. He felt the battle must be long. But, said he, at the last, Ahriman himself shall be purified, Evil shall disappear. A conflagration that shall be kindled by the Infinite Being, "Time without bounds," who produced both Ormuzd and Ahriman, shall, as in a stream of melted iron, purify all things, for through it all beings must pass. Thereafter not only will Ahriman himself, but all in

his abyss also, be clarified, all evil consumed, all darkness banished. Remembering universal human yearnings, and our Saviour's words and works, who shall say how far such Persian hope adumbrates the fuller teaching of the Christian's faith, that "our God is a consuming fire"?

Whilst there are such resemblances as these, there are striking and deep and far-reaching contrasts between the Divine Redeemer of the world and the religious sage of Persia. But they are so evident, and so implied again and again even in our notes, that they do not require much further notice here, except that we may well remember, (1) That we have the Saviour's life in the fulness of a fourfold biography, however dim and distant other founders are. There indeed is one great glory of Christianity; for while religions that are mere mysticisms—like Brahminism and Gnosticism and most of the religions of Egypt and Greece, are without personal founders, those religions that are moral—such as those of Buddha, Confucius, Mahomet, Zoroaster, centre in a person. That person is the living centre of the system; from him radiates its life and light. While of all such as radiate from a person, none have that person's life so fully delineated and so copiously recorded as that system has whose central Person is the only Perfect Man, the Christ of God. In contrast we may again remember, (2) That Jesus Christ reveals One Absolute Ruler of the universe; not, as Zoroaster dreams and proclaims, two antagonistic and nearly equally balanced sovereigns. The Christian faith is in one King-Father, not in the Dualism that easily becomes prolific with the polytheism, of false religions. Yet a final point of contrast to be remembered is, (3) That Jesus Christ reveals Himself as the Captain of Salvation, and the way to victory. This we have already seen, and it is so clear in Christ's doctrine about Himself that "he who runs may read." This egoism is not in Zoroaster. And if it had been, it would not be warranted by the history of his system. For the body of Parsees that exists to-day is small and ever diminishing. Whilst, notwithstanding all that discourages and beclouds the horizon of human life, it

surely is to be gratefully acknowledged that Jesus Christ has some worshippers in every language, some followers on every shore, and that their number grows and will grow, till "the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever."


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Scientific Facts used as Symbols.

"Books of Illustration" designed to help preachers, are somewhat, we think, too abounding. They are often made up to a great extent of anecdotes from the sentimental side of life, and not always having a healthful influence or historic foundation. We find that preachers and hearers are getting tired of such. Albeit illustrations are needed by every speaker who would interest the people, and are sanctioned by the highest authority. Nature itself is a parable. Hence we have arranged with a naturalist who has been engaged in scientific investigation for many years, to supply the *Homilet* with such reliable and well-ascertained facts in nature, as cultured and conscientious men may use with confidence, as mirrors of morals and diagrams of doctrines.

Subject: The Balanus,—Age altering Habit.

 FEW years often change the habits of a man. The middle-aged man has scarcely any of the habits of the youth left. And if the proof of his identity depended on their resemblance, it would indeed be hard to establish. A like change of habit is observable in many other existences. We may take from a class of molluscs the acorn-shells (*Balanus balanoides*) as an example. It is a very remarkable fact, that, although the balanus never moves from the spot on which it has taken up its habitation, and, indeed, is incapable of any kind of locomotion, yet when very young it was an active, wandering little creature, furnished with jointed limbs, much resembling a shrimp or crab, and swimming freely through the water with a succession of bounds. What a complete settling down to quiet ways, what a thorough transformation is here! But is it more striking than the metamorphosis of the hobbledehoy youngster into the sedate sage?

Subject: Solar Rays,—Human Opinions concerning God.

IT cannot be too clearly impressed upon the inquirer, that human opinions respecting God have frequently merely the effect of obscuring the glories of God. They are only the media, often the dense and unhealthy media, through which certain human intelligences look at Him; and, so far from revealing Him, they, rising from impure sources, obstruct the clear view which under other influences might be obtainable. Let men's opinions in different ages and lands be what they may respecting God, He is still absolutely the same and unchanged. That which changes, is the human opinion or medium through which men gaze. And it is pestilent or wholesome according to an infinitude of circumstances. Sometimes we see the sun with absolute clearness. When there are less favourable conditions, it is enveloped in dimness. But the change is not in the sun. It is contingent upon the exhalations of sublunary things. For it is evident that at each hour of the day the solar rays come from the parts above the atmosphere with the same power, whether the sky be clear or clouded. If no cloud intervenes, all the rays come to the surface of the earth and heat it; but if one half or one fourth of them should be intercepted by cloud, only the other half or three fourths of the rays can affect the surface; and when the whole sky is covered with dense clouds, the greater part of the solar rays will be intercepted by them.

Subject: Warriors the Followers of Insects.

IF the genus *eciton* (a species of foraging ants) are abroad upon a foraging expedition, they spread out their columns, climbing over every leaf, plant, shrub, and tree, putting the whole animal as well as insect world into commotion and alarm. All apterous insects, particularly *blattæ* and spiders, are preyed upon. At other times, a community of *ecitons* engage in a regular attack upon a nest of some peaceful and industrious species of *Formica*. The *ecitons* crowd into the nests of the ants, each seizing upon a helpless victim, and carry or drag it out of the nest. If the ant prove too heavy for a single

eciton to carry, it is ruthlessly torn into pieces, two or more assisting in the operation. The march is then commenced back to the nest of ecitons; the living ants and the mangled remains of others being probably carried there for the purpose of feeding the young brood of the marauders. From studying these creatures and their methods and depredations, the conclusion seems forced upon us, that they must have been invaluable as examples to warriors and to those scientific gentlemen of blood-thirsty taste, whose carefully elaborate statistical treatises on methods of attack, in which, with the greatest nicety, there are given calculations showing how the greatest plunder can be taken from the enemy with the least injury to the invader and with the most ruinous results to the enemy. And really the question is not easily disposed if we ask whether men show more genius than insects in their warfare. In what do the foraging insects differ from those of these ants, except in magnitude of suffering?

Subject: The Maggot,—Moral Transformations.

THERE are marvellous transformations in the material as well as in the moral world. The full-fed maggot, that has rolled in filth till its tender skin seems ready to burst with repletion, when the appointed time comes, leaves the offensive matters it was ordained to assist in removing, and gets into some convenient hole or crevice; then its body contracts or shortens, and becomes egg-shaped, while the skin hardens and turns brown and dry, so that under this form the creature appears more like a seed than a living animal; after some time passed in this inactive and equivocal form, during which wonderful changes have taken place within the seed-like shell, one end of the shell is burst off, and from the inside comes forth a buzzing fly, that drops its former filthy habits with its cast-off dress, and now, with a more refined taste, seeks only to lap the solid viands of our tables or sip up the liquid contents of our cups.

Look again into the moral world. There you see a trans.

formation as wonderful. The selfish debauchee, whose horrid taste has grubbed in every sort of immoral filth and become habituated to the base, the evil, and the dishonourable, has been brought into contact with the necessary spiritual conditions for a change; and behold, from one stage to another he passes, until at last his tastes are entirely altered, and his existence is changed, and even he is able to join in the light and purity of the world. Elsewhere behold the miser is transformed to the philanthropist, the coward into a hero. We watch the fly's aerial circlings in the sunbeam, and remember with wonder its degraded origin. The preacher looks over his congregation, and, as he sees those who have become noble and virtuous, he is able to take heart for new work; for, as he remembers in their presence the deluded and the wicked who are yet to be transformed, he says, "And such were some of you; but you are regenerated by the higher power, and these others may be changed likewise."

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

SKETCHES PHILOSOPHIC AND RELIGIOUS

By W. B. CHILLOW.

DIOGENES AND HIS LANTERN.
—The story of Diogenes going about with a lantern in the daytime in quest of an honest man, or, as his namesake the biographer of the philosophers has it, in quest of a MAN, may not unaptly symbolize the case of a mind endeavouring to find out truth amid the labyrinth of prevailing opinions; all bearing the name, yet masking the most opposite or heterogeneous principles—an inquisition, therefore, neither superfluous through the lapse of ages, nor to be quelled

by a self-complacency that would interpret the non-acceptance of its own conclusions into a symptom of mental or moral distemperature.

PATRONAGE OF PHANTASMS.—Truth, of whatever kind, is only fact or reality. But in a multitude of instances mankind are much fonder of fiction than reality; all false sentiments being so many fictions or fancies in place of facts. One reason may be, that there is often considerable difficulty in arriving at facts, but little or none in

taking up with some vague or apparent resemblances. It is with great beauty that Plato speaks of truth as τὸ ὄν, that which *is*, in contradistinction to what he stigmatizes as τὸ δεῖκνόν, or that which consists in opinion; though, in the application of these expressions, the founder of the Academy proceeds on views somewhat remote from modern speculation, except as concerned with the curiosities of a vanished or a transcendental phase of philosophy; limiting the τὸ ὄν to those eternal archetypes or ideas which he supposed to reside immutably, yet as distinct essences, in the Divine Reason; while all outward things, and the notions of them, are but shadows or fantastic mockeries. To the knowledge of external objects therefore, as perpetually changing, and subject to dissolution, he refused the name of truth or science, employing the epithet δεῖκνόν, expressive of such knowledge as unreal, or dependent on appearance.

INTELLECTUAL SCAFFOLDING.—There are multitudes of truths which are worthless in themselves, and merit attention merely as stepping stones, or as a ladder conducting to something ulterior. When that is attained, the ladder may be dispensed with. The time will perhaps arrive when the topics which have served the infancy of reason, and the facts which may be compared to the scaffolding of an edifice, being laid aside, the essence of truth in every department will be so condensed and simplified as to come within the reach of the most limited capacity. This would still leave boundless

scope for disquisition and varieties of view; as hitherto problems and perplexities have multiplied faster than solutions or discoveries, and that too in proportion to the amount of civilization and culture. The nations most advanced in the career of intelligence and refinement, have always been the most speculative and curious. It was so with the Oriental nations most famed in the history of thought, among whom so many sects and philosophies sprang up. It was so with the most polished State of classical antiquity, the subtle and meditative Athenians. It has been so in Western Europe since the revival of letters, and especially since the breaking down of the old landmarks of opinion by the French Revolution. It is so at present with individuals in relation to each other. The larger their comprehension and sagacity, the greater commonly is the number of points on which fancy or reflection can lead them to differ; for it is in the nature of a developed mind to stretch its contemplations into remoter tracts, while every mind has its original or acquired peculiarities.

FOLLOWING IN THE TRACK.—The greater part of current opinions are entertained by the majority without evidence, intellectual or experimental; being transmitted from one to another as an heir-loom, and differing in fact little from what may be called stereotyped views of things. Most persons who hold truth, do so on the same principles that determine others in the adoption or retention of error; namely, education, fancy, connections, interest,

or the like; and the truths which they profess, they are incapable of proving to be truths, however susceptible of demonstration. The consequence often is, that many are willing enough to look at both sides of a question within certain precincts; but once touch their own sentiments or faction, and their seeming impartiality vanishes.

BIAS OF THOUGHT.—If there is any one attribute common to man which is engrafted on his original nature, and entirely the growth of circumstances, that attribute is prejudice. To meet a person altogether exempt from its influence, may be pronounced, if not impossible, at least one of the most difficult things in the world. It is not easy to say whether prejudice resides most in mansions or in cottages; in courts or in camps; among the clergy or the laity; philosophers or the vulgar; authors or their readers. The forms which it assumes vary with each individual understanding, being almost as numerous as the several opinions of mankind; and what seems remarkable, those whom it most sways are generally least conscious of its operation. The weakness, in each of its Protean shapes sufficiently ignoble, in none appears more so than when contrasted with its opposite, fairly enough defined by the admirable Medea, in relation to his own learned and ingenious, though often fanciful lucubrations, "if I have hit upon any truth," says he in a letter to Mr. Hartlib, "It is wholly to be attributed to my indifference in such searches, to embrace

whatsoever I should find, without any regard whether it were for the advantage of one side or another:" a memorable remark of that distinguished man in extenuation of his own abilities, which appear to have been so much shrouded from their possessor as they were conspicuous to others. The observation may remind one of a saying of Sir Isaac Newton's, that if he had made any discoveries above the rest of mankind, it was owing to nothing but industry and patient thought: a circumstance, by the way, which would alone suffice to show that excellence such as Newton's, though matchless in its kind, by no means indicates the highest order of genius. In general, men have so little patient or independent thought, that they are like travellers over a plain covered with snow, who, if there be no track, are bewildered, but if they find one, are too happy to slide into the footsteps already provided.

BEST KIND OF PATIENCE.—Many persons have patience in affliction who have little or none in the pursuit of truth. Yet in the latter case it is more beneficial, being productive of positive advantage; while in the former the advantage is chiefly negative.

IMPEDIMENTS TO TRUTH.—It were easier to imagine than portray the extent to which the progress of truth is, not only impeded, but often supplanted for a time, by that of error, in consequence of the precipitance and passion of men, and the multiplicity and haste in which works are now published. Harvey is said to

have spent eight years in maturing his discovery respecting the circulation of the blood before he communicated it to the world. A genuine search after truth, whose dwelling is beyond the haunts and perturbations of the multitude, is a very quiet, unostentatious thing.

PAINTED TRUTH.—The goddess herself has not sufficient charms to captivate the vulgar, but must be veiled in mystery, or invested with adventitious ornaments or attractions, to strike the popular fancy. An unsophisticated mind loves truth for her very simplicity,

and contemns alike the arts of the sophist and the empiric.

TRUTH'S PARTIAL VOTARIES.—Her praises are sounded by many who are at best but her partial votaries; among whom I fear Dr. Johnson, admirable above most for high moral self-reliance and integrity, was one; who would denounce the slightest deviation from fact in a statement of distance or time, or other insignificant minutiae, but who felt little scrupulosity in the colouring of a controverted question, or in bearing down the force of evidence to achieve a momentary triumph in debate.

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

THE RELATIONS OF CHRISTIANITY AND SCIENCE. A Sermon preached during the visit of the British Association to Bristol, 1875, Redland Park Church, by REV. GEORGE DEANE, D.Sc., F.G.S. London: Hodder & Stoughton. Price sixpence.

This is a suggestive and well-reasoned sermon on one of the greatest themes of our day, and was very appropriate to the occasion on which it was delivered. Its stand-point is unassailable. For it argues, and illustrates the argument in many forcible ways, that since both Biblical Science, or Theology, and Natural Science are both developing, and so continually undergoing modifications in some of their respective utterances, it is hasty and premature and altogether unscientific to pronounce on their final agreement or disagreement. The dogmatism of many

scientists, not less than that of many theologians, is well combated by one who evidently understands what he is writing about.

PASTORAL THEOLOGY. By the late PATRICK FAIRBAIRN, D.D. WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR BY REV. JAMES DODDS. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

The preface will put our readers in possession of the nature and contents of this volume. "The lamented Author of this treatise lived to prepare it for the press. It seems to have been originally written in its present form, though it was repeatedly delivered to his class as a course of lectures. There can also be little doubt that it was intended to be a sequel or companion volume to his recently published work on the Pastoral Epistles. As such it may be safely accepted by the public; for the sound judgment, lofty aim, and evangelical spirit that characterise the work on the Epistles will not be found wanting in the present performance. Though probably not free from the defects almost inseparable from posthumous publications, the following pages will, it is hoped, amply sustain the high character of Principal Fairbairn as a theological professor. They relate to a subject which in these days is of growing importance, and which has by no means been exhausted, though several good practical works connected with it have of late made their appearance. Principal Fairbairn left instructions that no extended memoir of him should be published by any of his friends. Accordingly nothing of the kind has been attempted; but as he also indicated that he had no objection to a brief record of the leading events of his life being given to the public, it has been thought advisable by his trustees that such a summary should be prefixed to this work. A succinct Biographical Sketch has therefore been prepared by one who knew him long and well, who was among the first to become acquainted with his high merits as an author, and who always regarded with admiration his noble Christian character."

The Biographical Sketch which this work contains, though short, is interesting and well written. With the "Typology of Scripture," "Ezekiel," "the Book and its Prophecy," some of Dr. Fairbairn's translations, we have long been familiar; also with his "Imperial Bible Dictionary" and "Pastoral Epistles." And from few theological writers of this age have we derived greater good. Whilst none of his works are marked with any great brilliance, striking originality, or rhetoric charm, they are all profoundly thoughtful, intelligent, and instructive. He has nobly served his generation by the will of God, and he has fallen asleep. He hath entered into the rest which remaineth to the people of God. The treatise here on the office and duties of the Christian pastor possesses all the valuable characteristics of his former productions. It comprises nine chapters, the subjects of which are,—“The Relation of the Pastoral office to the Church, and the Connection between Right Views of the One

and a Proper Estimate of the Other; The Nature of the Pastoral Office and the Call to Enter on its Functions; The Pastoral and Social Life of the Pastor; The more Special Duties of the Pastoral Office; Different Kinds of Discourses; Supplementary Methods of Instruction; Public Prayer, and other Devotional Services; The Administration of Discipline; Subsidiary Means and Agencies." This work will be invaluable to the young minister who is just entering on his pastoral duties.

JESUS IN THE MIDST. By GEORGE CRON. Glasgow: Thomas Morison.

One of the most deeply interesting, morally significant, and heart-touching incidents in the evangelical biography, is that of the woman "which was a sinner," in the house of Simon the Pharisee. Hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of sermons have been preached on this historic fragment. It has always had special attractions for those preachers of the Holy Word who possess susceptibilities for the highest order of impressions. The observations and reflections comprised in the beautiful little volume before us are all drawn from this heart-thrilling incident. The volume consists of six chapters or discourses, the subjects of which are,—*"The Advantage of a Plurality of Gospels; Christ Invited to a Feast; An Unexpected Visitor; The False Logic of Simon; An Explanation Volunteered; A Humbling Comparison; Forgiveness and Love; A Thrilling Announcement; A Glorious Dismissal."* The author, who is regarded as one of the ablest ministers in the earpest and growing denomination to which he belongs, and who has contributed several valuable discourses to our pages, appears in this volume to great advantage. He is seen here with his keen eye, peering into the deep spiritual principles that underlie words and sentences; with his strong intellect, analysing, combining, adjudicating; and with his great manly heart aglow with love to Christ and human souls.

THE HOMILIST. The proposed re-publication of the first eleven volumes, comprising the First and Second Series, brought into eight small or four large volumes, to be published in two years, at £3 2s. the entire set, has been more than once brought under the notice of our readers. A large number have sent in their names as subscribers, but at present not sufficient to justify commencement. The enterprise will involve a large capital, and the price be so low that the outlay can only be returned by an extensive circulation. It would be gratifying to us to spend our leisure hours in going carefully through these eleven volumes (of which 50,000 have been sold) and making them in every way as perfect as it is possible for us to do. But the matter must rest with those who believe in the importance of the work. If each of our readers will take the responsibility of disposing of one set, and send their names, we will lose no time in bringing out the volumes.



A HOMILY

ON

Biblical Holiness.

"As He which hath called you is holy, [after the pattern of that Holy One who hath called you] so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy"—1 PETER i. 15, 16.

TWO strong currents of religious thought and action are flowing side by side before us, and we have to decide whether or not they flow from the eternal fountain of all truth and life. One movement aims at *extension*, seeking to widen the field of Christian usefulness; the other aims at *depth*, seeking to deepen the roots and so to multiply the fruits of Christian excellency. It is of this latter that we now speak.

Is there then, or is there not, another and better path, a shorter and more scriptural way, to holiness of heart than the Church of Christ has been supposing? That is the question we have to solve, and it is no mere theological problem; it is a solid and practical question of our inner and outer life. Has the Christian Church been neglecting for many centuries a source of sanctity which, if found and employed, would have made its ex-

perience immeasurably higher and its history unspeakably happier?

We are being told that we may be sanctified (or made holy) even as we are justified, *instantaneously*; that holiness is to be acquired "through faith;" that if we will but do that which at any hour we may do, "consecrate ourselves wholly to Christ" and look for the outpouring of the Spirit, we shall receive in a favoured moment such a baptism of the Holy Ghost as will immediately heighten our Christian life and will continuously sustain us in spiritual strength and joy; that, thenceforth our experience will not be subject to unhappy fluctuations, but will be an abiding state of spiritual rest and power in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now, IS THIS SO? If it be, there is no reason why we should not in one week make half our hymns inapplicable, not by reason of their over-statements, but by reason of their spiritual shortcomings; no reason why we should not leave them behind us as dirges of the desert, and retune our harp to psalms of the promised land; no reason why we should not all of us rise into a spiritual condition in which our prayers would have to be entirely reformed and our sermons of past years be as worthless as programmes of past meetings.

The marked excellency of spirit, the purity of life, the unquestionable sincerity of those who invite us to this "more excellent way," and the fact that they tell us that their own experience corresponds with their doctrine, make it almost imperative on us that we should consider whether we have not something to learn and something to acquire.

Let us see whether we can determine—

I. *What is that holiness of which scripture speaks*; and let us at once, not only allow, but insist with all emphasis and earnestness, that we are called unto holiness, that we

altogether fail and fall short of Christ's redeeming purposes except we attain some height of holiness in the sight of God. Here we hit a blot in the expressions and the practice of many, perhaps even a majority of, Christian men. It is a common thing for those who have been the servants of Christ for a long period to express themselves as if they were tremulous beginners, who hardly knew whether they had entered the kingdom of God. After years of Christian experience we ought to know our state, to rejoice in our felt freedom, to be sure of our sonship, to feel happy in the conscious friendship of Jesus Christ; we ought to have the air and spirit of those who know God to be our Father, who know ourselves to be His children and heirs, who know that Christ is ours and that we are His.

And there must be something seriously wrong about us if we cannot give thanks to God for advancement in likeness to Christ, for greater conformity to His own nature, for increase in holiness. God's will is our sanctification. We are chosen unto obedience through sanctification of the spirit. We are called to be holy ones. Christ gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to Himself a people peculiarly His own, zealous of good works. We are to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the living epistles of Christ, the imitators of God. There is no question that the new teachers are right in calling on us to take a high view of our present estate in Christ Jesus; they are quite right in urging that it is not only the forgiveness of sin and a title to eternal glory that we are to inherit by faith in Christ, but a present possession of eternal life—a life in God, a life unto God, beautiful with Christian virtue, bright with heavenly joy. The root thought of holiness is *separation*: one is holy or is sanctified when he is separated from that which is evil or inferior and unto that which is good or

supreme. A Christian man is holy, just as he is separate from sin and consecrated unto God. The two are inseparable in scriptural holiness. Mere withdrawal from sinful places, persons, and actions, without a cleaving of heart unto the Holy One, may be legality, but is not holiness in God's esteem. On the other hand, frequent approach to a throne of Grace and much praise of the Infinite One, without a hatred of evil and turning from transgression—this may be devotion, but it is not holiness. The two things must be conjoined—a forsaking of all that is evil in the sight of God, and a union and communion of spirit with the Holy One Himself. To this every Christian man is most undoubtedly called; and surely he must be a strange Christian who does not know and feel it to be true. Possibly he may not put it to himself in these particular words, but the truth itself he knows, or he can be a Christian in nothing but the name. There seems to me a grave error or oversight in the theology of some of these modern teachers at this point. They demand that Christian men should come into a state of entire consecration to Christ, and then look for a life-quickenning effusion of the Spirit. If they do not forget, they at least fail to state, that no man ever enters the kingdom of Christ without surrendering himself, under Divine influence, wholly to his Saviour. That faith in Jesus Christ which does not accept Him for all that He offers to be to the soul, which only leans on His propitiatory work, and does not cheerfully accept Him as Sovereign of the soul and as Lord of the life henceforth and evermore, is dead, is vain. No man can truly trust in Christ as a Saviour until, taught heavenly wisdom by the Holy Spirit of God, he longs to be saved from sin and to be brought into a state of union and fellowship with the God from whom he has guiltily departed. No man ever is saved by Jesus Christ who does not “yield himself unto God,” and de-

termine, by God's help, to "depart from all iniquity." Any interval between faith in Jesus Christ and the consecration of the soul to Him, is unknown to Scripture and to the experience of the holy. Some qualification has to be made, indeed, respecting the actual fulness, the absolute completeness of this spiritual surrender; but, taking Scripture with Scripture, we affirm that the true order is this—first: the illumination of the Spirit of God, showing the sinfulness of sin and the excellency of Christ and His service; then the consequent faith in Him—a faith which includes trust in His atoning work for the forgiveness of sin, and also an acceptance of Him as the true Friend and Lord of the soul, to whom everything is to be surrendered. Then, from this great starting-point comes the new life, a life of trust, and love, and obedience, and joy in Christ Jesus, nourished by the word of God and continually sustained by the indwelling Spirit. I urge, that from the time of the first awakening of the soul by the Spirit of God, there are found within both a deliberate intention to devote all things to the Saviour's service, and the action, in lesser or larger measure, of the same Spirit, the Divine Sanctifier of our human nature.

Now, let me meet the difficulty which immediately suggests itself, to meet which there has been some departure from old lines, and, I think, from scriptural truth. It will be said, "But if there be this consecration of self from the beginning, and this indwelling of the Spirit, how is it that so many Christian lives are so unbeautiful and so unspiritual as they are? I answer, *because Christian life*, under the conditions to which we are subject here, is, as Scripture plainly states, a *struggle and an endeavour*. Because such is our broken and damaged nature, and such is our human life, so beset with hindrances and adversaries, that our progress must be a *growth*, gradual and slow—first the blade, then the

ear, after that the full corn in the ear—first the babe, then the child, then the man in Christ Jesus ; must be a *building up*, stone after stone of spiritual work ; must be a *discipline*, an exercising ourselves unto godliness ; must be a *race*, in which every impediment has to be thrown away and every nerve and muscle strained to full tension ; must be a *wrestling*, in which there is resistance unto blood, so strenuous is the strife ; must be a *campaign*, in which no defensive armour is to be forgotten and no offensive weapon unused, so vigilant and so powerful is the foe.

I need not urge that these are Scriptural representations of Christian life ; and all else in the New Testament is in harmony with them. Paul wrote many letters to his converts. He assumes that they are holy, that they have consecrated themselves to Christ, that they are living in conscious and happy fellowship with their Father and their Saviour. He uses, indeed, hyperbolical language respecting their spiritual state,—which some have not had discernment enough to perceive is figurative, and which they have misunderstood,—which unmistakably supposes them to be living under the quickening impulses of God's Spirit. Nevertheless he finds it very necessary to reprove, rebuke, and exhort them. He takes it for granted, not only that they had much knowledge to gain, but much of elementary goodness to acquire ; that their sanctification was by no means complete, that it was proceeding at a greater or smaller rate, depending on the use they made of the means of grace and growth at their disposal. He speaks even of himself as strenuously pressing toward the goal of Christian perfection, needing to restrain by energetic effort (castigate, literally) his own body, in order to have it in subjection, lest he himself should be a castaway.

What is the explanation of this ? Two things explain

it. One is this : when we first gave ourselves to God, then, as in all the chief steps of our course, we only knew very partially what we did. Like James and John, we said in reply to our Lord's question of personal service, "We can ;" but we little knew,—only experience *could* teach us,—all that a life-long, heart-deep service meant. We have found out since, what victories on victories it involved. But we were sincere to the full measure of our knowledge, and our sincerity was accepted, and God has led us on and made us to know that His service means struggle and endeavour, victory and glory after battle and endurance.

The other truth is this, that God is sanctifying us, having regard to our own individual characteristics, and paying respect to these. He is *so* working within us that each one of His children matures according to his own special personal constitution and circumstances. There is not to be monotony in Christian excellence : there is to be some colour in Christian character ; there is to be the play of individual temperament and disposition. One man will develop this grace, another that. God will not be dwelling in the soul in such wise that the man himself will be no more or little more than a mere instrument or organ. God's Spirit is present and powerful in such a way that the image of Christ is formed while the mental and moral peculiarities of the individual soul are retained. Hence we shall have every variety of Christian worth. One good man will not use just the same vocabulary and speak in just the same strain as another. One man will show his devotedness along one line, in one department of human action, and another man in a different one. Sanctification, holiness, is the development, the gradual formation in us, of the character of the Holy Son of God ; a work wrought in each soul in a way peculiar to itself ; a work which is very largely indeed the direct pro-

duction of the Spirit of God, but which is also the outcome and result of manifold means of spiritual good, and which takes shape and form and colour from the particular bent and attitude and constitution of the human spirit who is being sanctified.

I have necessarily anticipated the other main point of this discourse on holiness, viz.,

II. *The path to its possession.*

I have already indicated that this is not to be a short, swift flight from the lowlands of unworthiness to the cloudland of evangelical mysticism, but rather a good long persevering climb to the high table-land of spiritual excellency. A climb, not unhappy, not unrewarded; nay, rather accompanied with many refreshing views, pleasant and even delightful to a living soul. Speaking generally, I should say that the path to the attainment of a higher life is that of *a free and full resort to all those sources of sanctity* which are the rich legacy of the work of our Divine Saviour.

Holiness, we are told, is to be obtained by faith. Yes, I reply, by faith, if you take that word in all its meaning. Not the faith which by one act appropriates the blessing, and receives in an hour, in an instant, all the fulness of the heritage; but the faith which accepts and applies the work and the word of Christ day by day, year after year, through all the life.

By faith we believe that the Scriptures are the very word of God, that the records we have in our New Testament give us the very words of Christ, the very writings of His apostles; these, in faith, we read, so taking into our minds the very thoughts, into our hearts the very feelings of the Holy One, and *so* are sanctified—"sanctified through the truth."

By faith we realize the presence of our Divine Father, the nearness of our Lord Jesus Christ, His observance of

our heart and life, His acceptance of our love and our submission; and we "stand before God," we walk and live in the conscious presence of the holy Lord and Saviour, and *so* are sanctified—sanctified by faith in His "presence with us always."

By faith we believe that our Maker and our Redeemer and our Sanctifier are ever waiting to receive our worship, our adoration; ever waiting for our spiritual approach, and we go to Him in praise, in prayer, in devout communion, and *so* are sanctified—sanctified by an elevating intercourse, a hallowing fellowship with our holy Heavenly Friend.

By faith we apprehend that God reveals Himself to our hearts, peculiarly, as a Holy Spirit whose unperceived but powerful impulses quicken the soul, kindling its love, restraining its passion, heightening its hopes, and we lift our heart in believing prayer that God will come to us, that Christ will come to us, and enter our heart and abide with us, making us His temple, His dwelling-place, and *so* are sanctified—sanctified by the indwelling, the renewing Spirit of our God.

By faith, a living faith, a lasting faith, a faith which through years of service and of struggle, of love and of joy, appropriates the promises and applies the truths of God to the aspiring and endeavouring human soul, are we made holy.

Is this all? No! it is not all; it is much, but it is not *all*.

By *watchfulness*, by taking heed unto our way, by examining our own heart, by "keeping our heart with all diligence,"—or, as it is literally and strikingly, "beyond all keeping,"—by careful avoidance of those things which however harmless to others, we know to be dangerous to us, by conscientious regulation of our bodily wants and cravings, by shunning that society in which we find

ourselves injured and our life depressed, in a word, by practical Christian wisdom, are we kept from evil and thus drawn to God, and *so* are sanctified.

By work, by kindly usefulness, by loving sympathy, by weeping with them that weep and rejoicing with them that do rejoice, by encouraging the meek, by instructing the ignorant, by raising the fallen, by communicating truth, bounty, blessing, to them that are in need; by giving freely of that store which we have so freely received, by every form of sympathy and succour, we are made more like the generous and holy Giver of Himself, and *so* are sanctified.

And if last, yet surely not least—

By God's discipline, His *daily* discipline in our homes and in our business and when among our friends, in all our various relations, and by His *special* discipline when He visits us with sorrow and trouble, when He sends chastisement in Fatherly love, when He makes our feet to pass through dark shadows, our head to be bowed under stormy heavens, our soul to be burdened with a great weight of grief, when thus He comes to us and lays His hand upon us, and calls us to closer communion, to nearer following, to heartier service, then are we purified in spirit, then are we led to look more to the things which are unseen and eternal, and *so* are sanctified.

Thus are we led upwards. From the spot of earliest conviction and aspiration and resolution, through struggle and endeavour, through failure and disappointment, through victory and thanksgiving, along paths of prayerfulness and praise, through fields of activity and enterprise—by the exercise of every kind of Christian virtue gladdening and strengthening the soul, we rise to higher things; we reach advanced truth, a firmer faith, a deeper peace, a serener joy, a brighter hope; we pursue a more useful course; we attain to a more steadfast character; we

show more of the spirit of Christ in everything which tries and proves us; and, "after the pattern of that Holy One who hath called us, we become holy in all manner of conversation."

This I believe to be the holiness which IS scriptural, and this the way which Scripture sanctions for its attainment. I believe that those who imagine that anything like perfection or completeness of Christian character is to be attained suddenly and by a leap, in answer to faith, will find themselves mistaken, and, like men that essay to fly when they are not God-provided with wings, they will come to the ground and be bruised by the fall. I am also seriously apprehensive lest a large number of Christian men, catching up and employing the passwords and peculiarities of phraseology of these new teachers, will vainly suppose themselves to be possessed of a higher life when they have only acquired another language; and the end of that delusion can only be evil. We may depend on it that any theory, however productive of present brilliant consequences, which is not based on the Bible,—taken, not in part, but as a whole, read, not in the letter, but in the spirit,—will, in the end, be injurious in its working. And when I go to the great Teacher to learn of Him, and read through the letters of His inspired Apostles, and when I consult the experience and history of the Church, I conclude that sanctity of heart, that height of Christian life, is only to be attained by freely, patiently, persistently, employing *all* those sources of spiritual benefit which the Divine Father and Saviour and Disposer of all has placed within our reach.

Meantime is there not something to be gained from this movement? Yes; much, I reply. We have, if we are Christ's, consecrated ourselves to Him; but we need again and again to re-consecrate ourselves, body and spirit, to His service, to renew our vows unto our Lord.

By all means let us so do, not formally, but with deepest sincerity, at home, in the sanctuary, at the table of the Lord.

We need to be urged to take a lofty view of our possible attainments now and here. By all means let us correct our thought, if it has been low and narrow; let us raise our ambition, and aspire and endeavour after the heights of holiness which rise high and far beyond our present standing-place. Above all, we need to learn that there is great help to be gained direct from God in our upward course, far greater than most of us have yet availed ourselves of. We have not been taking hold of His strength as we might have done. There is a fountain of blessed power on which to draw, and we come to it far too infrequently. God's spirit is amongst us, is brooding over us, is ready to renew, to refresh, to purify, to ennoble us. Let us be more believing and so more prayerful and expectant, and so richer than we have been in heavenly influence and elevating power. Our hearts *might* be holier than they are; our lives *might* be higher. Let us watch, let us work, let us believe, as, even amid the distractions and the doubts of the present time, we might and should; let us realize that the purchase of our Saviour's work is a very ample and inexhaustible treasure of grace and life, which is ours to partake of, and we shall be more of what Christ looks to see us, and do more of the work He is expecting of us; our souls will bear more of His likeness, and our lives will be worthier and nobler, with more beauty dwelling in them and more blessing flowing from them, than in the years which are gone.

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Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Psalms.

Our Purpose.—Many learned and devout men have gone philologically through this *TANAKH*, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal *hermeneutics* of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough *homiletic* treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

Our Method.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1) The *HISTORY* of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2) *ANNOTATIONS* of the passage. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase, or allusion that may occur.—(3) The *ARGUMENT* of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is amongst the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4) The *HOMILETICS* of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavour so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately educed, as to suggest such thoughts, and indicate such sermonizing methods, as may promote the proficiency of modern pulpit ministrations.

Subject: A Portrait of a Genuine Penitent.

(Continued from page 268.)

HISTORY.—See page 263.

ANNOTATIONS.—See page 263.

ARGUMENT.—See page 266.

HOMILETICS.—We have said that this psalm contains two subjects: favours which a penitent implores, and arguments which a penitent employs.

I. FAVOURS WHICH A PENITENT IMploRES. He cries to Heaven.

First: *For deliverance from sin.* This we have dwelt upon already. (See page 266.)

He cries to Heaven,—

Secondly: *For moral restoration.* What does he desire to have restored? (1) Lost joy. “Make me to hear joy and gladness.” Prior to this awful sin, David was buoyant in soul and happy in his thoughts, affections, and aims. His conscience was at peace in him, he had a sense of the approbation of his Maker. But that is gone. He is miserable; a sense of guilt like a worm is gnawing within him, like a fire in the

centre of his being. (2) *Lost health.* "The bones which Thou hast broken." How sin prostrates all our powers, both physical, intellectual, and moral, unmans us, burns and steals the *vis* of manhood away. A good conscience re-invigorates the man. (3) *Lost purity.* "Create in me a clean heart, O God." The heart is the centre of our moral being, the fountain of our activities. Out of it are the issues of life. Sin has defiled this heart, blackened it with depravity, so that it is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." The penitent prays for its restoration: "Create in me a clean heart." (4) *Lost steadfastness.* "Renew a right spirit within me." Margin, "a constant spirit." Sin unsettles the spirit, distracts it, makes it capricious, fickle, changing as the wind, unstable as water. The penitent here prays for steadfastness to be rooted and grounded in the right.

He cries to Heaven,—

Thirdly: For *spiritual preservation.* "Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." He felt that he was not entirely rejected, God had not as yet thrown him off. He had not withdrawn from him His Spirit, as He withdrew all light from Saul, all strength from Samson; but deeply did he feel the danger of such a loss, and intensely does he deprecate it. Oh, if God casts us off, if He withdraws His Spirit from us, if He ceases to "uphold" us, what becomes of us? Ah, what? Detach us from God, and we become like planets cut from their centre, we rush into darkness and confusion truly. "Hold Thou us up, and we shall be safe."

He cries to Heaven,—

Fourthly: For *religious prosperity.* "Do good in Thy good pleasure unto Zion, and build Thou the walls of Jerusalem." To pray for Jerusalem, means to pray for the prosperity of religion in the country. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love Thee." "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence and give Him no rest till He establish and till He make Jerusalem a praise on the earth." Two remarks are suggested here. (1) That human rulers

should be specially desirous for the promotion of religion in their country. David was a king; and the advancement of pure religion in his country was a subject in which he felt deep concern. Whilst all men, even in their private capacity, should earnestly seek the extension of the true religion, and should join in the prayer, "Let the people praise Thee, O Lord," etc., "Thy kingdom come," etc., kings should be specially earnestly concerned in the matter. The more religion in a country, the more all wholesome laws are obeyed, the firmer the social order is preserved. (2) That the promotion of spiritual religion in a country can alone render the religious ceremonies of a people acceptable to God. Where a people's heart is filled with Divine gratitude, there God will be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness. But where this gratitude exists not, all sacrifices are an abomination. No offering to God, however costly, is acceptable to Him until the offerer has presented first himself as a living sacrifice.

Such are the favours which this penitent implores, and every genuine penitent prays for the same—deliverance from sin, moral restoration, spiritual preservation, and religious prosperity.

II. THE ARGUMENTS WHICH A PENITENT EMPLOYS. What are his pleas? What are the grounds on which this penitent bases his entreaties?

First: *The mercy of God.* "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies." Deeply as he had sunk in sin, he had not as yet lost faith in the freeness and fulness of Divine mercy. It was mercy he needed; justice would scathe him, power would crush him. He was miserable, and he felt that his misery was deserved. Hence mercy was his only hope.

"'Tis mercy, mercy, I implore,
I would Thy pity move;
Thy grace is an exhaustless store,
And Thou Thyself art love."

He bases his entreaties on,—

Secondly: His *personal confession.* "For I acknowledge

my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me." Whilst he would not consider confession as giving a claim to the favour of God, he knew it was a condition of forgiveness. He who does not confess his sins with a broken, penitent, contrite heart has no reason to hope for absolution. It is sin, not its consequences, that he deplores. Genuine penitence is not so alarmed at hell as at iniquity. Sin is the abominable thing.

He bases his entreaties on,—

Thirdly: *The necessity of inward purity.* "Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom." Observe here (1) That genuine religion has its seat in the soul. "The inward parts." It is not in language, however scriptural; not in services, however unexceptionable in their external character. It is something in the "inward parts." It is supreme love for the supremely good. (2) That genuine religion is a reality. "Truth in the inward parts." It is not a passing sentiment, or a fitting thought, but a *reality*,—not a fiction, but a force, a living force. It is an "incorruptible seed," not a withering plant, a fixed star, not a flying meteor. The only real thing in human character is religion. (3) That genuine religion is what God requires. "Thou desirest truth." "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." The great object of the Divine desire in relation to man, is "truth in the inward parts," *moral reality*. (4) That genuine religion is Divinely imparted. "In the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom." "Every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights," etc. God alone can teach the heart.

He bases his entreaties on,—

Fourthly: His *determination to be useful.* "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee." Should he have what he sought, he promises to devote himself to spiritual useful-

ness. Learn from this passage, (1) That the conversion of sinners is a work pleasing to God. This penitent thought so, otherwise why did he make this plea? We know that it is so. Like the father of the prodigal of old, God is delighted at the return of sinners, He rejoices over them. (2) That the conversion of sinners requires moral instruction, "Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways." Sinners must be instructed as to their moral condition, as to the claims of God, as to the love of Christ, as to the importance of salvation. (3) That moral instruction can only be imparted by those who have been restored to the Divine favour. "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit, *then* will I teach transgressors Thy ways." As a rule the converted alone can convert. He who is in closest alliance with the Divine will be the most qualified effectively to teach transgressors their ways.

He bases his entreaties on,—

Fifthly: The *Divine acceptance of genuine contrition*. "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." Perowne observes on this verse, that, "When speaking of thankfulness, we might have expected him to say, a joyful heart, or a thankful heart; but, instead of that, he says, a contrite heart. For the joy of forgiveness does not banish sorrow and contrition for sin; this will still continue; and the deeper the sense of sin and the truer the sorrow for it, the more heartfelt also will be the thankfulness for pardon and reconciliation. The tender, humble, broken heart is therefore the best thank-offering."

CONCLUSION.—Learn from this psalm,—

First: The grand *curse* of humanity. What is that? Sin. What inexpressible agony this sin of David carried into his heart. What darkness, what tempests, what pangs, what horrors, what inward convulsions. If one sin could do all this, what will not the sins of a life effect? Sin is the accursed thing. It is the poison in his cup; it is the virus in his veins; it is that which has brought death into the world and all our woe. It is loathsomeness in itself. "It is not every

unclean thing," says Trench, "that offends the sight; while the slightest stain upon some things will excite in us deep dislike: the feeling depends entirely upon the nature of the thing and the purpose to which it is applied. We pass by an unclean stone unnoticed; it is unconscious of its state, and meant to be trampled under foot. But rising a step higher in the scale of creation, to an unclean plant, we become conscious of a slight emotion of dislike; because we see that which might have pleased the eye and have beautified a spot in the creation disfigured and useless. An unclean animal creates our dislike still more, for, instead of proving useful in any way, it is merely a moving pollution. But an unclean human being excites our loathing more than all; it presents our nature in a light so disgusting that it lessens our pity for him if he be miserable, and excites in us ideas of disease, contamination, and pain. But an unclean spirit—it is loathsome above all things; it is the soul and essence of pollution, it is the most unclean animal in the universe, it is the spectacle which excites the deep dislike of God Himself. His dislike of it is the more intense, because originally it was pure, and capable of making perpetual advances towards Divine perfection; whereas it now presents itself to His eye robbed of all its purity and defiled in all its powers, a fountain of pollution."

Learn,—

Secondly: The grand *work* of humanity. What is that? To get rid of sin, to get it washed away, to get it thoroughly eradicated from the human soul. To this work all the energies of men should be concentrated and directed. For this Christ came into the world and died. He "came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." For this every man should labour with intense and unremitting labour.

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Job.

The Book of Job is one of the grandest sections of Divine Scripture. It has never yet, to our knowledge, been treated in a purely Homiletic method for Homiletic ends. Besides many learned expositions on the book found in our general commentaries, we have special exegetical volumes of good scholarly and critical worth; such as Drs. Barnes, Wemyss, Mason Goode, Noyes Lee, Delitzsch, and Herman Hedwick Bernard; the last is in every way a masterly production. For us, therefore, to go into philology and verbal criticism, when such admirable works are available to all students, would be superfluous, if not presumption. Ambiguous terms, when they occur, we shall of course explain, and occasionally suggest an improved rendering; but our work will be chiefly, if not entirely, Homiletic. We shall essay to bring out from the grand old words those Divine verities which are true and vital to man as man in all lands and ages. These truths we shall frame in an order as philosophic and suggestive as our best powers will enable us to do; and this in order to help the earnest preachers of God's Holy Word.

Subject: A Solemn Asseveration, a Noble Determination, and a Weighty Reflection.

"Moreover Job continued his parable, and said," etc.—Job xxvii. 1-10.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—One might have expected that Zophar would have spoken next. Indeed Wemyss asserts that he did, and that this whole chapter is his utterance; but by general consent Job now commences a speech which he continues to the close of chapter xxxi. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar have retired from the field of controversy and return no more.

Ver. 1.—"*Moreover Job continued his parable, and said.*" Though the word parable properly denotes a comparison, it is used here and elsewhere to denote a sententious discourse; and the words may be rendered: "Job took up again his impressive discourse, and said."

Ver. 2.—"*As God liveth.*" A form of solemn adjuration, and means, as certainly as God liveth. "*Hath taken away my judgment.*" This means perhaps, who hath rejected my cause. "*And the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul.*" Margin, made my soul bitter.

Ver. 3.—"*All the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my nostrils.*" This means, as long as I live and the Spirit of God sustains me.

Ver. 4.—"*My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.*" He means to say, as certainly as God Almighty liveth, he would not vindicate wickedness, or deal in sophistry. As if he had said, "If I were to confess myself a guilty man and a sinner, my lips would speak iniquity, which they never shall."

Ver. 5.—"*God forbid that I should justify you.*" This means, Far be it from me to admit the accuracy of your charges against me. I cannot concede that I am a great sinner because I am a great sufferer. He was conscious of his integrity. "*Till I die I will not remove min*

integrity from me." I will not, I cannot admit that I have been insincere or hypocritical. With my last breath I will maintain my sincerity.

Ver. 6.—"*My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.*" I cleave to my righteousness and firmly maintain it has ever been with me and never for a moment left me. I have never acted the hypocrite, I have lost much—property, health, friends, etc., but I have never lost my sincerity.

Ver. 7.—"*Let mine enemy be as the wicked, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous.*" This is probably said that he might show that it was not his intention to justify the wicked, and that in all he had said it was no part of his purpose to express approbation of their course. His friends had charged him with this; but he now solemnly disclaims it, and says that he had no such design. To show how little he meant to justify the wicked, he says that the utmost he could desire for an enemy would be that he would be treated as he believed the wicked would be. "Although I have spoken of the prosperity of the wicked, do not suppose that I envy them. In all my wretchedness I would not exchange my position for theirs. Yea, if I had an enemy, the worst thing I could wish for him would be that he should have the moral wretchedness of the wicked man."

Ver. 8.—"*For what is the hope of the hypocrite.*" The hypocrite, or the wicked man, may have, and often has, great gain it is true; but what is the worth of his hope? "*Though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul.*" When he dies, where is his hope?

Ver. 9, 10.—"*Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him? Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?*" Dr. Bernard seems to me to express the idea of Job here. "Can he delight himself in the Almighty? Can he call on God at all times, as I do? Almost intolerable as are my sufferings, I have yet this great consolation, that I can call upon God and with confidence declare to Him my readiness to appear at any time before His judgment seat for the purpose of clearing myself of any charge that may be brought against me, and of fully proving my innocence. Can the wicked man, can the iniquitous man do this? How absurd, then, would it be of you to suppose for one moment that I envy their lot."

HOMILETICS.—We have in these verses three subjects for useful thought.

I. A SOLEMN ASSEVERATION. "As God liveth." The words imply a belief,—

First: In the *reality* of the Divine existence. "As God liveth." He lives, this is a fact incontrovertible, eternal, fundamental. This fact lies at the foundation of all facts, gives meaning, harmony, unity, to all facts. The man who denies

this fact lives in the realm of phantasies and fancies ; the man who ignores it is unconscious of the inspiration of true life. "As God liveth." Whilst some deny this fact, the bulk of the race practically ignore it—they are without God in the world. The words imply a belief,—

Secondly: In the *awfulness* of the Divine existence. There is a sublime awfulness in the words "As God liveth." Of all solemn facts in the universe, the most solemn is this, "God liveth." He who looks into all hearts, loathes all depravities, supports all existence, and who will in no wise clear the guilty "He liveth." All souls may well stand in trembling awe in the presence of this fact. "How dreadful is this place!" Yes, the place where He is, is dreadful ; but the fact that He is, is more dreadful still. "The Lord is in His holy temple ; let all the earth keep silence before Him."

The words imply a belief,—

Thirdly: In the *severity* of the Divine existence. "Who hath taken away my judgment, and the Almighty who hath vexed my soul." As nature has winter as well as summer, so God has a severe as well as a benign aspect.

Fourthly: In the *nearness* of the Divine existence. "The spirit of God is in my nostrils. His breath is my life." "He is not far from every one of us." "In Him we live and move and have our being."

Oh that men would practically recognise this fact! that God is real, awful, and so near to all. "He that cometh unto God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of all them that diligently seek Him."

We have in these verses,—

II. A NOBLE DETERMINATION. "My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit. God forbid that I should justify you, till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me ; my righteousness I hold fast and will not let it go ; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live." What does he determine ?

First: Never to *swerve from rectitude*. "Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me ; my righteousness I hold

fast and will not let it go." Whatever happens to me I will not play the false, I will not be insincere. I will be real, I will be faithful to my conscience; my righteousness I will hold fast. I could not hold my property, it is gone; nor my children, they have been taken from me; nor my health, it has departed; nor my friends, for they have failed me; nor my reputation, slander has stolen it away; but my righteousness I hold fast. No one can rob me of my integrity, or destroy the consciousness that I am sincere. Alas! many have no righteousness to hold; and some who have it hold it with a feeble grasp, and will give it up for some tempting offer. But to have it and to hold it, this is truly noble; to hold it as a drowning man holds a rope thrown out for his rescue, holds it amidst the furious winds and dashing billows. Thank God! we can hold it if we have it; no power in the universe can take it away without our consent.

He determines,—

Secondly: Never to *vindicate wickedness*. "Let mine enemy be as the wicked, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous," etc.

Job has so many times alluded to the prosperity of the wicked that he is apprehensive he may be suspected of envying their lot, and of wishing to be in their place—a suspicion in the highest degree offensive to him. In order therefore to prevent his friends from entertaining any such erroneous notions, he says: "Let mine enemy be as the wicked man, and mine adversary as the iniquitous man. So far from envying the wicked on account of their success and prosperity, I would not for the world exchange my condition, miserable and wretched as it is, for theirs, well knowing that the stings of my conscience would be infinitely more painful than these sores with which I am covered from the sole of my foot to the crown of my head."

Great is the tendency of some men to vindicate wickedness in connection with wealth and worldly power. Intemperance, debauchery, gambling, laziness, haughtiness, a "fast life;" these, in what are called the nobilities and royalties, are very

venial evils, if indeed evils at all. Let us catch the inspiration of this old Arabian, and determine never to vindicate wickedness even in connection with worldly greatness; to damn it everywhere.

III. A WEIGHTY REFLECTION. "What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul? Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?"

The writer reflects here upon the wicked men of wealth, and he concludes—

First: That in *death* they will have no *hope*. "What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?" The "soul" here means life; and death is God taking away the life. A man dies, not by accident, age, or disease, but because God hath taken away the life. "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away." But what hope has a wicked man at this period? None. It might have flickered up to this moment, but the cold chill of death puts it out for ever, and his soul is enshrouded in a starless despair.

Secondly: That in *trouble* they will have no *answer to their prayers or delight* in God. "Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him? Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call on God?" Trouble will come upon him—that is destiny; he will cry to God when in trouble—that is instinct. But will he be answered? The interrogative means, no. He will not hear his "cry." "He will laugh at their calamities, and mock when their fear cometh." A good man delights in God; but God to a wicked man is terrific and repugnant.

CONCLUSION.—Learn,—

First: The greatest *reality outside* of us. What is that? God. All else is shadow. He is a substance. Realize this; set the Lord always before you.

Secondly: The greatest *worth inside* of us. What is that? Virtue, or what is here called "integrity," "righteousness." This is more valuable to a man than kingdoms or riches of the world. With this, he has hope in death and joy in God for evermore.

Sermonic Glances at the Gospel of St. John.

As our purpose in the treatment of this Gospel is purely the development, in the briefest and most suggestive form, of Sermonic outlines, we must refer our readers to the following works for all critical inquiries into the author and authorship of the book, and also for any minute criticisms on difficult clauses. The works we shall especially consult are:—"Introduction to New Testament," by Bleek; "Commentary on John," by Tholuck; "Commentary on John," by Hengstenberg; "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels," by Westcott; "The Gospel History," by Ebrard; "Our Lord's Divinity," by Liddon; "St. John's Gospel," by Oostersee; "Doctrine of the Person of Christ," by Dörner; Lange; etc., etc.

Subject: Christ and Men.

"Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek Me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come."—JOHN viii. 21.

EXPOSITION: Ver. 21.—"*And shall die in your sins.*" ἐν τῇ ἀμαρτίᾳ ὑμῶν. It should be "in your sin." It does not mean, you shall die *for* your sins, but in your sin, in your moral guiltiness. "If they persisted in their unbelief and rejection of Him, they could have no salvation, they must die in their sin, because they rejected the one Saviour from the power and curse of sin."

HOMILETICS.—There are three things here worthy of attention.

I. THE WITHDRAWMENT OF CHRIST FROM MEN.

First: Christ had *a way*. "My way." By His "way" He undoubtedly means His way through the Cross up to His Father's presence and His native heavens. As if He had said, I have a way clearly defined, though rugged and torturing in some parts. In that way I go, in it I shall not pause, and from it I shall not swerve. What a "way" was His! It will be the study of eternity.

Secondly: Christ pursued His "way" *voluntarily*. "I go." You cannot force Me. I am not the victim of coercion, I am free. (1) The voluntariness of Christ's death is no extenuation of the guilt of His murderers." The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him, but woe unto that man by whom He is

betrayed." (2) The voluntariness of Christ's death is the glory of His history. Why has Christ's death the power, not only to save humanity, but to thrill and charm the universe? Because it was *free*. "I have power to lay down my life, and power to take it up again."

A more terrible calamity cannot happen to men, than the withdrawal of Christ from their midst. A greater calamity far than if the sun were to withdraw from the heavens, and leave them in sackcloth. There is a sense in which Christ withdraws from impenitent men now. Another thing here worthy of attention is,—

II. THE FRUITLESS SEEKING OF CHRIST BY MEN. "Ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins." This is a repetition of what Jesus had before said in the previous chapter. "Ye shall seek me but shall not find me." When I am gone, and the judgments of heaven will descend on your country, you will be seeking me, but you will not find me; you will have filled up the measure of your iniquity, the things that belong to your peace will be hid from your eyes.

First: The fruitless seeking is *possible*. There is a *fruitless* seeking for Christ. The day of grace closes with some men even while they are in the world. In the judgment He will be earnestly sought, but shall not be found. "Many shall say unto me on that day," etc., etc.

Secondly: This fruitless seeking is *lamentable*. "Ye shall die in your sins." Sin is like quicksand, the man who walks on it must ultimately sink and be lost. "It sometimes happens on the coast of Britain or Scotland that a person walking on the sand will suddenly find a difficulty in walking. The shore is like pitch, to which the soles of his feet cling. The coast appears perfectly dry, but the footprints that he leaves are immediately filled with water. Nothing distinguishes the sand which is solid from that which is not. He passes on, unaware of his danger. Suddenly he sinks. He looks at his feet: the sand covers them. He wishes to turn back, but with every effort sinks more deeply. With indescribable terror he finds he is involved in a quicksand. He throws

down his burden; but it is already too late. The slow burial of hours continues; the sand reaches to his waist, to his chest, to his neck; now only his face is visible. He cries; the sand fills his mouth, and all is silent." What a striking emblem of the danger of sin! Another thing worthy of attention here is,—

III. THE ETERNAL SEPARATION OF CHRIST FROM MEN. "Whither I go ye cannot come." The separation will be complete and irreversible. "Ye cannot come." Christ had said this before (vii. 34), and He refers to it again (xiii. 33). So that to Him the words had a terrible meaning. More terrible words than these could not be sounded in human ears, "Ye cannot come." It means incorrigible depravity, hopeless misery. Separation from Christ is hell. The commission of every sin contributes to the construction of the impassable gulf.

Germs of Thought.

Subject: The Voice from Heaven.

And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
—Rev. xiv. 13.

HOW much light dwells in this familiar sentence! How many truths gleam from it—gleam with all the varied beauty of the stones in the breast-plate of the Hebrew priest of old! We have here:—

I. THE DIVINE CARE FOR THE BEREAVED. "I heard a voice from heaven" . . . "Saith the Spirit." The Apostle was evidently thinking—a vision was passing before him that made the thought very vivid, of the persecution of the martyrs even unto death, and of the terrible havoc that the sharp sickle of death would work through the ages. While he is thinking of

the death that would thus befall men, he is led to contemplate the voice and the writing of consolation. These come from heaven. Heaven cares for earth in its bitterest experiences. The Bible is full of this doctrine. So we often rightly sing Faber's lines—

"There is no place where earth's sorrows
Are more felt than up in heaven."

Every time the earth is torn for a new grave, the heavens, though they often seem to be cold and still, are not impassive. There is "a voice from heaven;" there is a message for mourners from the skies. There is trouble down here, but there is sympathy up there. There is the fatherly care of God, the brotherly care of Christ, and the consoling care of the Comforter. So, when there is bereavement, it is not only that human lips are ready with their utterances of kindness. Many of us have had good reason for thanking God for such human voices. But there is a Divine voice as well. In the time of bereavement it is not only that human letters charged with tenderness and sympathy reach us in our woe; but there is a Divine handwriting often almost invisible, and perhaps never rightly read, except in the firelight of affliction. Why is the message for mourners to be written? "Write"—that the message may come softly and with tender silence. "Write"—that the message may come where grief secludes itself. "Write"—that though human voices grow old and become still in death, it may come perpetually. The message from Heaven is, moreover, affirmed and emphasized by the Spirit of Truth, who reveals to men's minds what the human eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived. Here we have:—

II. A DIVINE REVELATION ABOUT THE HOLY DEAD. Mary's cry about her Lord, and our Lord, is more common than we may imagine. We are often really saying to the earth, to the elements, to the winds, about our departed beloved or great ones, "If ye have borne him away, tell me where ye have laid him." Where are our dead? What are they doing? What are they feeling? Earth can but echo our cry; only Heaven

can answer it. The researches of science, the dreams of poets, the theories of philosophers, do not satisfy us about the dead. We want a revelation ; we want an unfolding of the real, the actual, the fact. We are not left to our speculations, not left to believe only that our yearnings and our instincts must be fulfilled ; but there is a definite and accurate revelation about the holy dead. Here we have :—

III. THE SACRED RELATIONSHIP OF THE HOLY DEAD. They “die in the Lord.” They die, not merely believing in His teaching, not merely breathing His Spirit, but they die sustained by His grace, and preserved by His power. The fellowship that Christly men had with Christ in their lifetime, is not weakened or shaken by any of the mysterious experiences of death. Death rather intensifies and completes it. Here we have :—

IV. THE CELESTIAL BLESSEDNESS OF THE HOLY DEAD. That close relationship with Christ, in dying, has led to this fuller development of their blessedness. “Blessed are the dead.” They are not to be thought of as those who have been overborne by some great adversary, and trampled down by some resistless foe. They are to be regarded as conquerors. That “rest !” What can it mean ? It does not mean evidently that they are gone out of being ; for non-existence is not rest. A limb that is dead cannot be said to be a limb that is resting. A man utterly dead could not be said to be a man resting. The grave is not the end even of physical existence, if the body is only resting in the grave. On the tombstone of a Christly man truth has cut in clear letters : “The inn of a traveller on his way to Jerusalem ;” for, though the coffin, buried, “flesh shall see corruption,” it is triumphantly predicted, “This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality.”

Still less is death the end of the spirit-life. It is resting, not annihilated—resting, for it has returned to God who gave it. This repose is not a lapsing into some stagnant, weird, inactivity. For it is equally true of those who are said to rest from their labours that “they rest not day nor night.” The Saviour is

said to have gone into His Sabbath rest when He ascended into heaven, and the Eternal God rested at the Creation. These words could not mean that the Saviour ceased to think—ceased to feel—ceased to work; or, that the Infinite God stayed the outflow of eternal power and love. They indicate, surely, the fulness of life—the harmony of life—the complete satisfaction of life. They who have gone to heaven partake of this rest—the rest of Christ—the rest of God. You remember the striking simile used by Robertson of Brighton, when he tells us that “the symbols in the world of nature of this rest, are not the lake locked in ice, but the strong river moving on calmly and rapidly in silent majesty and strength,—not the cattle lying in the sun, but the eagle cleaving the air with fixed pinions, and giving you the idea of repose combined with strength and motion.” Besides these elements of rest, is there not in God and in Christ, and in the redeemed, as the very essence of rest, an utter self-forgetfulness. That is at the heart of true restfulness. When the Saviour was on earth, He said He would give rest; and to weary men He gives rest now. “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” His gift of rest is the bestowal, even on earth, of the spirit of reconciliation and harmony, of self-forgetfulness and love. In heaven, they who see Him clearly, and resemble Him completely, must have rest, for they fully know, and are fully like Him who is the Centre of Rest—the Source of Rest—the King of Rest. Here we have,—

V. THE UNDYING INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY DEAD. It has been suggested by some exegetes that the expression about their “works” ought to be rendered “their works follow with them.” All their labour is over with their life. But ordinary observation and experience, and all history and many scriptures, teach us that the results of the works of the holy dead follow them long after they have passed away, so that we may readily accept the more common and evident interpretation of this phrase. Thus we are led to recollect about noble and devoted ones who have left us in these lower regions of service and labour, that what they began to do will continue to

be done even as the result of their own efforts. Dear to them was many a project and plan born of love to Christ; very dear some endeavours into which, in loving fellowship with others, they threw unreservedly their strength of body, and intellect, and heart. For their sake, as well as for our own and for Christ's, we rejoice to know that the seed they buried will spring up in rich harvests, that the sacred tones of their teachings will swell into growing harmonies—that the forces they set at work, however subtle and silent, will widen in influence and develop and multiply till myriads are affected by the life-work of one man. In truth, the many generations that are gone have more power over this world to-day than this one generation now living here. There have been individual men, now dead, who have probably had more power over our experiences and our circumstances to-day, than one half of the living generation could have. Our libraries, our sanctuaries, our political institutions, our civilization, our religion, are all monuments of the mightiness of posthumous influence. Lasting power for good is here described as the legacy to the world, not only of our reformers and authors and preachers, but of all whose Christly lives ended in a Christly death, and whose very death even, like their Lord's, was necessary to their deeper and wider and more sacred usefulness. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

Bristol.

URIAH R. THOMAS.

DEATH, A STREAM.

There is a stream whose narrow tide
The known and unknown worlds divide,
Where all must go.
Its waveless waters, dark and deep,
'Mid sullen silence downward sweep,
With noiseless flow.

The Preacher's Finger-Post.

Subject: GODLINESS IN ALL CONDITIONS OF LIFE.

"Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God."—1 Cor. vii. 24.

The text teaches three things,—

I. That MEN ARE FOUND IN VARIOUS CONDITIONS OF LIFE. This is too obvious for either proof or illustration; some are rich, some are poor, some are free men, some are slaves, some are masters, some are servants. The variety in human conditions is useful in many ways. (1) It affords scope for benevolent activity. The exercise of benevolence is the essence of virtue, and necessary to the well-being of moral intelligences. But if all men were in precisely identical worldly conditions, there would be manifestly no sphere for the play of benevolence. (2) It creates a bond of social unity. *Gratitude* is one of the strongest social ties, and hence the relation between the benefactor and the beneficiary, between the giver and the receiver, the helper and the helped, is generally close, tender, and strong. Were all men in exactly the same condition, there would be, with their present depravity, a spirit of reckless independence, and a state of social anarchy and disorder. (3)

It invests society with social charms. Variety is one of the charms of existence; souls have an instinctive craving for it; in nature there is ample provision for it. But if all men were found here in exactly the same social condition, society would be utterly destitute of its charm; to see one man, would be to see all. The whole social aspect would wear a somnific uniformity, and sound forth the echoes of a dull monotony.

The text teaches,—

II. That SOME OF THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE ARE OF DIVINE APPOINTMENT. "Wherein he is called," i.e., in that condition of life wherein he is placed. The Apostle's primary reference in this chapter is to *marriage*. The Corinthians, it would seem, had, in their intercourse with the Apostle, put questions to depreciate conjugal life, and to suggest that it would be well to break off marriage with an unbeliever. From this condition he refers to other conditions of man. He passes away from the condition of the unmarried and the married to the condition of the circumcised and uncircumcised, to the condition of the freeman and the slave. He gives us to understand in this verse that to some of these conditions men

have been called. We say that there are *some* conditions to which men are Divinely appointed. There are many which cannot be so viewed; to do so would be blasphemy.

(1) People are found in *matrimonial relations* which God has not appointed. Two people are brought together for life whose instincts, temperaments, habits, are so antagonistic that the sooner they change the relationship the better. True marriage does not consist in the mutual repeating of a formula, the signing of a legal document, or the passing through a religious ceremony, but in temperamental affinities, mutual esteem, and reciprocal affection. (2) People are found in *ecclesiastical positions* which God has not appointed. For example, Did God ordain that there should be an order of men paid out of the public taxes from £1000 up to £15,000 a year, wearing high-sounding titles, living in palaces, mingling in the most fashionable society, set apart as the *special* representatives of Him who "made Himself of no reputation," who, when on earth, had "nowhere to lay His head," but spent His life in going about "doing good?" Heaven never called men into such an impious condition as this. (3) People are found in *commercial engagements* which God has not appointed. Those who turn the ores of the earth

into implements of destruction, and distil the fruits of the earth into liquids that drown the reason, ruin the health, and destroy the morals of a community, are not "called" to their sphere. But conditions that are *inevitable* are those to which men are called. There is inevitable *poverty*. There are men born into poverty who have neither the foresight, health, skill, nor aptitude to rise out of it. There is inevitable *servitude*. There are men who are constitutionally slaves, their natural temper is that of servility and submission.

The text teaches,—

III. THAT IN EVERY CONDITION OF LIFE MEN SHOULD PRACTISE GODLINESS. "Let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God." What is it to "abide with God"? It means constancy of supreme love to Him: this should rule in all. Constancy of obedience to Him: there should be no deviation from His laws. Constancy of devotion to His cause. (1) Godliness is *binding* in all conditions of life. In whatever condition of life you are placed, legitimate or illegitimate, happy or otherwise, you are bound to love and serve God. As much so in the fiercest bustle of the market, or the bloody encounters of the battle-field, as in the quiet chamber or the consecrated temple. God is every-

where, and your relation to Him remains intact in all circumstances, all engagements, and in all places. (2) Godliness is *possible* in all the *inevitable* conditions of life. Even those conditions of life that are incompatible with godliness should be renounced at once, and Heaven will grant the help to struggle out of the doomed Babylons. Let no man say that his conditions are such that he cannot be religious. God knows your circumstances and will help you.

CONCLUSION: Godliness, where it exists at all, exists as a life, a permeating, ruling life, everywhere and always in the ascendant, always "abiding," whatever the conditions. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all to the glory of God."

Subject: THE TWO CUPS OF LIFE; OR, MORAL INCOMPATIBILITIES.

"Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils."—1 Cor. x. 21.

"Ye cannot drink a cup of the Lord and a cup of devils."—*Dr. Davidson*. But devils being the menials and messengers of Satan, are devils. Detaching the words from the context, which will be elsewhere explained, the text suggests,—

I. The MORAL INCOMPATIBILITIES IN LIFE. "The cup of the Lord, and the cup of

devils." Every man's life has the *two* cups. Out of one of these cups every man drinks, and by it he lives such a life as he has. What are these cups? (1) The one is the cup of *self-indulgence*, the other of *self-sacrificing love*. The devil's cup is full to the brim of selfish gratification. They who drink of it—and alas! the millions do—are absorbed with their own personal interests and pleasures. Christ's cup is that of self-denial. "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." (2) The one is the cup of *falsehood*, the other of *reality*. The devil's cup is full of fictions, phantasies, and vanities. False theories of religion, of happiness, of greatness, of life. Hence the millions who drink of it "walk in a vain show," their world is unreal and fictitious, they walk by appearances. Christ's cup is full of realities. "I am come," said Christ, "to bear witness of the truth,"—to reveal to men, not phenomena, but principles; not the forms, but the forces; not the semblance, but the spirit of existence. Those who drink of this cup are *real* men, real in thought, conviction, purpose, and life. They "quit themselves like men." (3) The one is the cup of *materialism*, the other of *spirituality*. In the cup of the devil everything is material—material pleasures, ma-

terial pursuits, material dignities. The men who drink of it feel there is nothing but matter. They not only live in the flesh but after the flesh and for the flesh. All is animalism. Their grand question is, "What shall we eat, what shall we drink?" In Christ's cup there is spirituality. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?" "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things that he hath in this world." The men who drink of this cup feel that the spirit is everything, they are "born of the spirit, are spirit," and live spiritually. (4) The one is the cup of *practical atheism*, the other the cup of *vital godliness*. In the cup of the devil there is no God, nothing but nature. The men who drink of it are without God in the world. God is not in all their thoughts. In Christ's cup God is the essence and spirit of its contents. "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." They who drink of this cup come under the consciousness of the fact that God is everything, not only the author, but the substance, spirit, and sovereign of the universe. Ever present, never absent, ever working, never idle; hence, like Enoch, they "walk with God." The text suggests,—

II. THE STRONGEST TEMPTA-

TION IN LIFE. What is the temptation? It is to participate of *both* cups.

First: All men begin and most continue with the devil's cup. We "were by nature the children of wrath even as others." The cup is put into the hand of the child at the very dawn of moral agency, he imbibes it, takes a liking to it, until it gets the mastery over him.

Secondly: Some—and their number is ever increasing—renounce the devil's cup and adopt the cup of Christ. The Apostle is referring to these when he says "Such were some of you: but ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

Thirdly: In both classes there is a desire to participate of both cups at the same time. Those who drink of the devil's cup are not morally satisfied, and hence they often desire if possible to participate of the other. They have a desire to be Christly and good, but they like the world and all the elements in the devil's cup too well. Hence they are everywhere dissatisfied. The devil's cup gives no moral satisfaction. On the other hand, many of those who drink of Christ's cup have frequently a strong desire to participate of the devil's cup. Hence the desire for self-indulgence, worldly pleasures and pur-

suits, etc., etc. Like the Jews in the wilderness, they have a hankering after the fleshpots of Egypt; like Lot's wife, they cast a lingering look upon the old scenes of Sodom.

Thus there is a temptation in all classes, both the good and the bad, the converted and the unconverted, to participate of the two cups at the same time.

The text suggests,—

III. THE ATTEMPTED IMPOSSIBILITY IN LIFE. "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils." "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him: know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God." Clear as daylight this. Ye cannot be selfish and benevolent, materialistic and spiritual, false and true, atheistic and godly, good and bad at the same time. Every man must be one or the other.

CONCLUSION: My unregenerate brother, drink no more of the devil's cup. It may be pleasant, but it is sapping your spiritual constitution, and stealing away your health. It may be delicious, but it will and must turn to poison.

Thrust it from you; fling it as you would the scorpion, with all the force of your being, away. Thousands have done so: not one who has done it has ever regretted the sacrifice. On the contrary, they have rejoiced in the event as one of the brightest epochs in memory, the commencement of an upward and ever brightening career. And to you, my Christly friends, I say, cherish no lingerings after the old cup; crush every rising desire for another sip of its contents. The cup you have in your hand has all and more than you want to satisfy your conscience, to strengthen your faculties, to ennoble your existence, and beatify your being.

Subject: CHRISTMAS: GOD IN CHRIST.

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."—2 Cor. v. 19.

The anniversary of the Redeemer's birth is again dawning on us, and our subject is in harmony with the associations of the season. Two thoughts are brought under our notice:—

I. A wonderful MODE of Divine existence. "God in Christ." The Infinite coming within certain limitations; the Invisible appearing in a human form. "Great is the mystery of godliness," God manifest in the flesh.

First: Though wonderful,

this is not *unreasonable*. The idea of the Divine incarnation is an old idea that has sprung up in the mind of millions of men who have not been blessed with any special revelation; nor is it more unreasonable to suppose that God should appear in man than that He does in material nature, in sun, moon, stars, etc.

Secondly: Though wonderful, it seemed necessary to the work to be *accomplished*. Universal man had contracted guilt, and the guilty conscience had invested the Almighty with attributes of terror that made the soul turn from Him with abhorrence. To save them, required they should be disarmed of this fear, and fired with love towards Him. How could He do this but by appearing in the form of man? If He had appeared as an angel, it would only have intensified the terror and increased the alienation. He appears in human flesh, as a babe, a youth, and a man, and says, "It is I: be not afraid."

Another thought is,—

II. A wonderful work of DIVINE MERCY. "Reconciling the world unto Himself." God is a great worker. He is the eternal fountain of life in unremitting flow. He is essentially active; the mainspring of all activity in the universe, but that of sin. There are at least four organs through which He works—material

laws, animal instincts, moral mind, and Jesus Christ. By the first He carries on the great revolutions of inanimate nature in all its departments; by the second He preserves, guides, and controls all the sentient tribes that populate the earth, the air, and the sea; by the third, through the laws of reason and the dictates of conscience, He governs the vast empire of mind; and by the fourth, viz., Christ, He works out the redemption of sinners. Reconciling the world some read, "a world." There are millions of worlds. We need not ask what world: the human world. (1) The human world in distinction to the world of fallen angels. (2) The human world in distinction to any particular class of the human world—All. Mark, it does not say, He is in Christ reconciling Himself unto the world. The popular theology speaks of Him in this way, but it is unscriptural and blasphemous. There is no vengeance in Him to be appeased; no wrath to be pacified. "Fury is not in Me, saith the Lord."

CONCLUSION.—Brothers, repudiate and denounce with all the energy of your being the idea that Christ reconciles God to the world. But proclaim in all the tones that can melt the heart, that His great mission to the world was to reconcile hostile humanity to Himself.

Seeds of Sermons from the Minor Prophets.

If the Bible as a whole is inspired, it is of vast importance that all its Divine ideas should be brought to bear upon the living world of men. Though the pulpit is the organ Divinely intended for this work, it has been doing it hitherto in a miserably partial and restricted method. It selects isolated passages, and leaves whole chapters and books for the most part untouched. Its conduct to the Minor Prophets may be taken as a case in point. How seldom are they resorted to for texts! and yet they abound with splendid passages throbbing with Divine ideas. It is our purpose to go through this section of the Holy Word; selecting, however, only such verses in each chapter and book as seem the most suggestive of truths of the most vital interest and universal application.

Micah calls himself a Morasthite because he was a native of Morasthethgath, a small town of Judea. He prophesied in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, Kings of Judah, and his prophetic mission commenced soon after that of Isaiah. He was contemporary with him as well as with Hosea and Amos. His prophecies were directed to Samaria, the capital city of Israel, also to Jerusalem. Hence we find denunciations against Samaria mingled with prophecies concerning Judah and Jerusalem. One of his predictions, it seems, saved the life of Jeremiah, who would have been put to death for foretelling the destruction of the Temple, had not Micah foretold the same thing one hundred years before.

The book is commonly distributed into three sections: chaps. i. and ii., chaps. iii. to v., chaps. vi. and vii. Each of these opens with a summons to hear God's message, and then proceeds with expostulations and threatenings, which are succeeded by glorious promises.

His style is bold, fiery, and abrupt, and has not a little of the poetic grandeur of Isaiah. His sudden transitions from one subject to another often make his writings difficult to decipher.

No. CXXII.

Subject: BE QUICK.

"Bind the chariot to the swift beast."—MICAH i. 13.

These words are addressed to the inhabitants of Lachish. "This place appears to have formed the link of idolatry between Israel and Judah. Lying on the frontier of the former kingdom, she was the first city in Judah that was led away by the sin of Jeroboam; and from her the infection spread till at length it reached Jerusalem itself. In the prospect of a sudden attack, it behoved the inhabitants to use all despatch in removing their families and what property they could take with them to a distance. Lachish was besieged by Sennacherib before making the threatened

attack on Jerusalem" (2 Kings xviii. 14).

Our subject is *promptitude in action*. "Bind the chariot to the swift beast."

I. Be quick in your MATERIAL ENGAGEMENTS. Man has material duties, these are as sacred and as binding as spiritual ones. Indeed, the distinction between the secular and the spiritual is not real, but fictitious. A man should be quick in all his legitimate temporal engagements, whatever they may be. Whatever is to be done must be done at once. "Be diligent in business." By quickness I do not mean the hurry of confusion, but adroit expertness, skilful promptitude. As Shakespeare says, "What the wise do quickly is not done rashly."

First: The quicker you are,

the more you will accomplish. An expert man will accomplish more in an hour than a slow man in a day.

Secondly: The quicker you are, the better for your faculties. The quick movement of the limb is healthier than the slow; the quick action of the mental faculties is more invigorating than the slow. As a rule, the quick man is in every way healthier and happier than the slow. Thirdly: The quicker you are, the more valuable you are in the market of the world. The skilful man who cultivates the habit of quickness and despatch, increases his commercial value every day. Those trade unions that enact that all of a craft should be paid alike, enact an absurdity and an injustice. One quick and skilful man may accomplish as much in one day as six slow men, though equally clever. Be quick, then, in business. "Bind the chariot to the swift beast."

II. Be quick in your INTELLECTUAL PURSUITS. You have an enormous amount of mental work to do, if you act up to your duty, and discharge your mission in life. You have manifold faculties to discipline, numerous errors to correct, vast and varied knowledge to attain. "The soul without knowledge is not good." No, not good either to itself or others. Be quick.

First: The quicker you are, the more you will attain. The more fields of truth you will traverse, the more fruits you will gather from the tree of knowledge. Some men in their studies move like elephants, and only traverse a small space. Others, like eagles, sweep con-

tinents in a day. The quick eye will see what escapes the dull eye, the quick ear will catch voices unheard by the slow of hearing.

Secondly: The quicker you are, the better for your faculties. It is the brisk walker that best strengthens his limbs, the brisk fighter that wins the greatest victories. It is by quick action that the steel is polished and that weapons are sharpened. Intellectual quickness whets the faculties, makes them keen, agile, and apt. "Bind the chariot to the swift beast."

III. Be quick in your SPIRITUAL AFFAIRS. First: Morally you have a work to do for your own soul. It is in a ruined state, it is like the "field of the slothful" and the "vineyard of the man void of understanding" of which Solomon speaks, it needs cultivation. The work is great and urgent. Secondly: Morally you have a work to do for others. There are souls around you demanding your most earnest efforts, etc. (1) Be quick; the work must be done during your life here, if ever done. (2) Be quick; your life here is very short and uncertain. (3) Be quick; the longer you delay, the more difficult it is to do. Be quick; "Whatsoever your hand findeth to do, do it with your might, for there is no knowledge nor device in the grave whither we are all hastening." "Bind the chariot to the swift beast."

"Oh, let all the soul within you
For the truth's sake go abroad;
Strike! let every nerve and sinew
Tell on ages—tell for God."

A. C. CORE.

No. CXXIII.

Subject: AVARICE.

"Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand. And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage. Therefore thus saith the Lord: Behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks; neither shall ye go haughtily: for this time is evil. In that day shall one take up a parable against you, and lament with a doleful lamentation, and say, We be utterly spoiled: he hath changed the portion of my people: how hath he removed it from me! turning away he hath divided our fields."—MICAH ii. 1-4.

The prophet in the preceding chapter foretold the judgment that would befall both kingdoms on account of their apostasy from the living God. He begins this chapter by denouncing the rapacious avarice of their leading men.

Oppression is one of the greatest social crimes, alas! one that has been prevalent in every age and land—a crime this, too, which the Bible denounces with great frequency and with terrific force. Avarice, or greed, is the spring and spirit of all oppression. In the text we have this rapacious avarice presented to us in three aspects.

I. SCHEMING IN THE NIGHT. The avaricious men "devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds." When avarice takes possession of a man, it works the brain by night as well as by day. It keeps the

intellectual faculties busy in the stillness of nocturnal hours. What schemes to swindle, defraud, and plunder men are fabricated in this London of ours every night upon the pillow! Perhaps there is no passion that takes a stronger hold upon man than this, and that works his intellect with such concentration and constancy. It has been called "the great sepulchre of all other passions."

II. WORKING IN THE DAY. "When the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand. Delitzsch renders this, "In the light of the morning they carry it out, for their hand is their god." The idea is, perhaps, what they esteem most, is the worldly gain of their avaricious labour. So it ever is; gain is the god of the greedy man. He sacrifices all his time and labour on its altar. Before it he prostrates his soul. Your avaricious man in the day trots about the streets, the shops, the markets, like a hungry hound in search of food. Shakspeare compares such a man to a whale, which plays and tumbles, driving the poor fry before him, and at last devours them all at a mouthful. Such whales have I heard of on the land, who never leave gaping till they've swallowed the whole parish—church, steeple, bells, and all.

III. SUFFERING IN THE JUDGMENT. "Therefore thus saith the Lord: Behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks," etc., etc. Judgment comes at last; and in the judgment these words give us

to understand the punishment will correspond with the sin. "Because they reflect upon evil," says Delitzsch, "to deprive their fellow-men of their possessions, Jehovah will bring evil upon this generation, lay a heavy yoke upon their necks, under which they will not be able to walk loftily or with extended neck." Ay, the time will come when the avaricious millionaire will exclaim, "We be utterly spoiled." "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you," etc.

No. CXXIV.

Subject: GOD'S TRUTH.

"O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the Spirit of the LORD straitened? are these His doings? do not My words do good to him that walketh uprightly?"—*MICAH ii. 7.*

"Thou called house of Jacob, is the patience of Jehovah short then? or is this His doing? Are not My words good to him that walketh uprightly?" Such is a modern translation. We prefer the translation of Henderson, as follows: "What language, O house of Jacob! Is the Spirit of Jehovah shortened? Are these His operations? Do not My words benefit him that walketh uprightly?"

These words seem to be a reply to an objection raised against the prophets in the preceding verse. The objector did not approve of predictions so terribly severe. "It is not strange," says Matthew Henry, "if people

that are vicious and debauched covet to have ministers that are altogether such as themselves, for they are willing to believe that God is so too." There are people in all congregations who revolt at the proclamation of any doctrines from the pulpit that chime not in with their love of ease and their cherished notions, and especially so if such doctrines are unfamiliar to their ears. They desire the old things to be iterated without end, and with as little change of form and note as possible. The text may be taken as a reproof to such. It says two things to them:—

I. That the SPIRIT of Divine truth cannot be RESTRAINED. "Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened?" There is no limit to truth; it is an ocean that has no shore, a field whose ever-springing seeds are innumerable. Men's theological systems, even the largest of them, have narrow limits. They are, as compared to Divine truth, only as a barren rood to a fertile continent; a little sand pool to the mighty Atlantic. It is not "straitened." It has no limit. To every true minister this Spirit has something fresh to suggest, and which he is bound to propound and enforce. "The Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from His word."

II. That the PRACTICE of Divine truth CANNOT BUT DO GOOD. "Do not My words do good to him that walketh uprightly?" Though you have never heard the particular truth before, though it may be too severe to please you, though it may clash with all your

prejudices and wishes, if you practise it, it will do you good.

First: It is to be *practised*. It is not merely for speculation, systematizing, controversy, and debate, it is for inspiring the activities and ruling the life. It is a code rather than a creed; it is not something to play about the brain, the imagination, or the emotions, but to possess, permeate, and transform the whole life. It must be incarnated, made flesh, and dwell in the land.

Secondly: When practised it is a *blessing*. "Do not My words do good to him that walketh uprightly?" Yes, they do good. When they are translated, not into languages and creeds, but into living deeds. A man gets good only as he builds up a noble character. But what is a good character? It is made up of good habits, and good habits are made up of good acts, and good acts are but the forms and expressions of God's words and ideas.

Homiletical Breviaries.

No. CCIV.

Subject: MAN DIVINELY ABANDONED TO HIS LUSTS.

"So I gave them unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels."—PSALM lxxxi. 12.

This Divine abandonment of men to their own lusts is not only one of the greatest, but one of the commonest curses of humanity. Men who persist in sinking the spirit in the senses, burying the soul in the flesh, entombing the conscience in animalism, are divinely damned. Such men abound in this age—an age of rampant materialism. In relation to this abandonment we observe, I. It is an abandonment to a life MOST DEGRADING. In it the man sinks into a brute. The brutal appetites govern him; the brutal pleasures engross his power and absorb his time he is "carnally sold unto sin." He cleaveth to the dust. We observe, II. It is an abandonment to a life MORALLY ABHORRENT. Is there a more loathsome spectacle in the universe to the rational eye of moral purity, than that of spirit running into swine?—than that of a being having the moral attributes, relations, and form of a man living the mere life of a brute? We observe, III. It is an abandonment to a life OF RUIN. (1) The law of its enjoyments is *decrease*. The animal pleasures of men

unlike their intellectual and spiritual, decrease in their power of delectation by repetition. Age deadens the nerves, and "desire faileth," and gradually the once delicious palls on the soul. It gradually brings on the awful, crushing *ennui*. (2) The *continuation* of its enjoyments is necessarily *short*. Disease and death terminate them. (3) The *memory* of its enjoyments must become morally *painful*—"Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime," etc., etc.

CONCLUSION.—When the Holy Book speaks of men in their unregenerated state as dead and buried, its representations are scarcely figurative, but terribly literal. Souls are in their graves here—walking graves it is true. The corrupt world is a moral cemetery. Oh that the predicted hour would strike, when the gospel trumpet shall sound so electrically, that all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man and start to spiritual life.

No. CCV.

Subject: A SOUL CONSCIOUS OF ITS DEPENDENCE ON GOD.

"Order my steps in Thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me."—PSALM cxix. 133.

This is the language of a soul conscious of its dependence on the Almighty; and here it cries for two things: I. FOR GUIDANCE, "order my steps." The human spirit is destined to move on and on for ever. It needs a guide; it cannot guide itself, nor can any finite creature do so. There is but one safe Guide. If He "order" our "steps," two evils will be avoided. (1) Moral stumblings. Souls are everywhere stumbling on the path of life, they fall, and often receive *fatal* injuries, "Hold Thou me up and I shall be safe." The other evil avoided will be (2) Unhappy destination. The path of life, whilst it may have no real end, but run on through ages interminable, has *one awful crisis* that decides the ultimate fate of the traveller, and that crisis is death. If He order the steps of the soul, the crisis will be the constant brightening and beautifying of the path. It cries here, —II. FOR EMANCIPATION: "Let not any iniquity have dominion over me." (1) This is the *worst* of despotisms. (a) It is the most criminal. There are despotisms social and political that are calamities, not crimes: the poor victim cannot avoid them. Not so the despotism of sin. A despotism which, in the first place, he

never ought to have allowed; but having allowed, he should break away from and become heroic and free. (b) It is the most powerful. A man might become such a victim of worldly despotism as to be imprisoned in a dungeon and cut off from all fellowship with living men. Still his soul may be free. Like Paul and Silas, he might exult in a freedom that no despot can touch. But sin manacles the soul, shuts out its light, and binds its faculties in chains mightier than adamant. (c) It is the most enduring. Death will put an end to all worldly despotisms; in the grave the slave is free from his tyrant. But death has no power to put an end to this slavery of the soul. (2) This is the most prevalent of despotisms. Social and political despotisms, alas! are widespread, but are not world-wide; there are sunny districts of freedom; but this despotism is co-extensive with the world of unregenerate humanity.

CONCLUSION.—Ever let us look earnestly to heaven for guidance and freedom.

No. CCVI.

Subject: RELIEVING THOUGHTS CONCERNING DEATH.

"I know that Thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living."—JOB xxx. 23.

The text suggests some thoughts of Job concerning his own death. Every man must die, and every man may feel concerning his own death three things that have a tendency to make the soul calm, and even brave in the prospect: I. There will be nothing UNNATURAL in my death. It is "appointed" as the death of every other kind of organized life on earth: it is the natural law of all organized bodies, to wear out, decay, dissolve. As the earth takes back to itself all the elements that have entered into the composition of vegetables and animals, why should I refuse or dread the demand? I may rest assured that kind nature will make a benign and beneficent use of all the elements that have entered into my corporeal existence. Let me be ready to yield them up unreluctantly, ungrudgingly, thanking the Infinite for their use.

1) It is *dishonest* for me to object to this; for my body was only borrowed property, a temporary loan, nothing more. (2) It is *ungrateful* for me to object to this. Though I never had a claim to such a boon, it has been of great service to my spiritual nature. (3) It is *unphilosophic* for me to object to this. Whatever my objections and resistance, it must come. II. There will be

nothing UNCOMMON in my death. "The house appointed for all living." Were I one of a few, amongst the millions of the race, singled out for such a destiny, I might complain; but since all, without any exception, must die, who am I that I should complain? Since Abraham and all the patriarchs, Isaiah and all the prophets, Paul and all the apostles, Luther and all the reformers, Milton and all the poets, Xavier and all the missionaries, up to the present period, have gone, why should I feel a moment's reluctance to join them in the mighty house? The fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever? III. There will be nothing ACCIDENTAL in my death. "I know that Thou wilt bring me to death." I shall not die because of any fortuitous incident, or because of any fatalistic force, but because my Father brings me to the grave. "Thou turnest man to dust, Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away." There are no accidental deaths, no premature graves. The eternal, all-loving Father brings us to death.

No. CCVII.

Subject: THE RICH DISCIPLE.

"A rich man."—MATTHEW xxvii. 57.

He was rich—I. In MEANS. Some are rich in money only. How poor are they! To hold money, is nothing; to use it for the highest good, is rapture! II. In SILENCE. Had the courage to hold his tongue. How few regret that they kept silence! III. In PATIENCE. Valuable the hostility and salutary the fear which leads a man in silence to spin the silken thread of patience, waiting for the kingdom of God. IV. In COURAGE. Mark says, he went *boldly* and begged the body of Jesus. The result of silent patience is surprising might. V. In SERVICE. Timely, distinguished, unique, essential, personal. Did he, unaided, draw the nails, wrap the body, carry it to rest? Nicodemus carrying his hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes. Heroic burden-bearers. He is rich—VI. In PRAISE. Blessed be the day when thou wast born. Thy daring devotion in the darkest hour has brought thee imperishable renown!

H. T. MILLER.

Liverpool.

Scientific Facts used as Symbols.

"Books of Illustration" designed to help preachers, are somewhat, we think, too abounding. They are often made up to a great extent of anecdotes from the sentimental side of life, and not always having a healthful influence or historic foundation. We find that preachers and hearers are getting tired of such. Albeit illustrations are needed by every speaker who would interest the people, and are sanctioned by the highest authority. Nature itself is a parable. Hence we have arranged with a naturalist who has been engaged in scientific investigation for many years, to supply the *Humilist* with such reliable and well-ascertained facts in nature, as cultured and conscientious men may use with confidence, as mirrors of morals and diagrams of doctrines.

Subject: The Rattlesnake,—Vice giving Warning of its Approach.

THERE are evils which give warning of their coming. Drunkenness does not seize upon a man suddenly. It gives warnings often and many. Avarice and a number of other vices can be detected long before we are within their reach. There are infallible indications by which we may be warned. The approach of vice is like the approach of the rattlesnake. This horrible reptile, one of the most venomous of serpents, warns man involuntarily against its formidable presence. At the end of its tail there is placed a rattle, which consists of a string of hollow, dry, semi-transparent bones, which constantly clatter against each other as the reptile moves, with a hoarse, dull, echoing sound. The bony rings increase in number with the reptile's age; and it gains an additional one, it is said, at each casting of the skin. The warning which it is thus compelled to give of its approach enables those who hear to escape an awful death. Happy are those men whose ears are open to the warnings which social monsters, far more horrid than the rattlesnake, in like manner invariably give of their presence and movements, and, profiting thereby, manage to escape.

Subject: The Sparrow,—The Vigorous Mind requires a Healthy Atmosphere.

A WEAK, enervated mind may live in a sickly atmosphere of cant or artificiality which would be incompatible with

the life of a healthy mind. In this case weakness and enervation, paradoxical as it appears, are able to endure more than strength and vigour.

A sparrow left in a bell glass to breathe over and over again the same air, will live in it for upwards of three hours; but at the close of the second hour,—when there is consequently still air of sufficient purity to permit of the sparrow breathing it for more than an hour longer,—if a fresh and vigorous sparrow be introduced, such an one will expire almost immediately. The air which would suffice for the respiration of the one sparrow, suffocates another. Nay, more, if the sparrow be taken from the glass at the close of the third hour, when very feeble, be restored to activity and sufficient vigour to fly about again, then, if once more, in its now healthy state, introduced into the atmosphere from which it was taken, it will perish immediately. The poisonous action of a vitiated air is better resisted by the feeble, sickly, organism than by the vigorous, healthy, organism.

Subject : The Tanghinia, a Fallacious Test.

MAN frequently satisfies himself that he has come to an accurate conclusion, merely because, on the application of what he considers an infallible test, he discovers a particular anticipated result. Often enough the test is utterly fallacious.

The Tanghir, or Tanyer, is the only plant of its genus, and is confined to Madagascar. Its poisonous seed is esteemed by the natives an infallible criterion of guilt or innocence. After being pounded, a small piece is swallowed by the supposed criminal. If he be cursed with a strong stomach which retains the poison, he speedily dies, and is held guilty; if his feeble digestion rejects it, he necessarily escapes, and his innocence is considered proven.

Now it is obvious to any educated mind, that innocence and guilt are in no way disclosed by this process; yet, inasmuch as it has been accepted as a test, its results are unquestioned

And there are numberless instances in which English society consents to be governed by results of tests, simply because those tests are generally accepted. Again and again it becomes important to inquire, whether, supposing your test does disclose a given result, that test is really as infallible as you deem it to be. They will be found to be only Tanghair tests, and, as such, utterly fallacious.

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

IN MEMORIAM: REV. DAVID THOMAS, B.A., OF BRISTOL.—No one, not even a passing stranger, could have been in our city last Friday and seen the immense and impressive procession that mournfully wended its way to Arno's Vale without feeling that the shadow of no ordinary death had fallen on our neighbourhood. For forty years, he who was being carried to the grave, had, with a short interval occasioned by illness, fulfilled his ministry in our city. That ministry, as you know, was marked by such vigour and freshness, such grand individuality, such far-reaching sympathy, and such reality, that it was the joy and pride of his fellow-ministers, and an untold power for the highest good to multitudes who have passed into the heavens, as well as to many who still survive, to realize as long as life lasts their irreparable loss.

My own feelings towards him are far too reverential to allow me to attempt anything like an analysis of his mind and character. Coming here, as I came,

to begin a very youthful ministry, knowing that he bore the name, and was the friend of my own beloved father, I seemed instinctively to look to him for fatherliness, so far as I might need it here. And I never once looked in vain. The protectiveness, the tenderness, the wondrous humility, that, as one remembered the contrast between us, almost awed one, made me realize what could be meant by the term, "Father in Christ." There are many more besides who will ever associate with his stature, his figure, his countenance, his tones, the huge tenderness and chastened strength that they most fitly expressed. So that when we say, "His works do follow him," we think not only of the sermons of this "preacher of righteousness," nor of the manifold activities of his ministry, but also of the influence that radiates from his character, and that pulses in all our memories of him.

And now he "rests from his labours." His intellectual keenness and grasp, his rich

vein of humour, his delight in scenery, his penetration of, and sympathy with, men, his joy in his home, contributed many pleasures to one to whom Christ had given His great gift of peace. But now his rest is perfect. Hence on, whatever broke that rest or troubled that great soul is for ever past.

There is not one amongst us in this city who were associated with him, who would not place some wreath of honour and love on his grave. The tried and trusted friend, the princely leader, is gone. Head and shoulder above most—physically, intellectually, spiritually, he naturally became our king. Like Elisha, we know that our Elijah is gone up into heaven, but mourn that our leader is taken from us to-day.

Bristol. U. R. THOMAS.

TRUE PREACHING.—The true secret of success in preaching, does not consist merely in eloquence, or in vigour of thought, or in ability of exposition. All these qualities may exist in abundance, and a man may yet be destitute of the one faculty which distinguishes the preacher from an orator, an advocate, or a divine. This faculty is that of speaking as man to man, with the life of personal experience and personal sympathy. The great majority of sermons, however rhetorically delivered, are simply essays. They are compositions upon a theme, not the expressions of a man's own heart and mind. We do not say this in disparagement of their authors.

There are but few men comparatively speaking who can bring their minds into direct contact with the truths and facts of life, and who, having done so, can give expression to both the process and results of their experience. But it is by virtue of this power that preaching still holds its place in the world. In these days of many books, no man need hear a sermon for the sake of mere mental instruction. But the voice of a living man speaking to us out of his own life, carries with it more practical illumination than many essays. Without knowing it, he touches chords in our own hearts, interprets half-conscious questionings, and leads us with him by a more irresistible influence than that of logic. To do this, indeed, he requires rare qualifications. He need not be a powerful original genius, but he must be original so far as to look at every question and every experience for himself, and to bring his own heart into fresh and direct contact with it. He must enter, moreover, into the problems, difficulties, theories, and the half-understood truths which are stirring the world about him. In the faith he proclaims we look to him to find a key and an interpretation for those perplexities of life, and a guide to lead us through them; and if we find that he understands us and leads us forward with a good heart and in a true spirit, he is sure to be welcomed and followed.—*The Times*, Nov. 27, 1875.



